

Israeli advisor unsure if PNA action will help

JERICHO (AP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's adviser David Bar-Ilan Saturday said he did not know whether any of the sanctions would be lifted in return for the Palestinians' help in solving the murder of the taxi driver (see story on page 2). "That is for the prime minister to decide," he told the Associated Press. Mr. Bar-Ilan added that catching three armed robbers was "not the same as destroying the infrastructure of the terrorist organisations." In return, Mr. Netanyahu has said the Palestinians must resume security cooperation with Israel before Israel will lift economic sanctions.

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Oil-for-food has proved it can work — U.N. official

BAGHDAD (AFP) — A U.N. official said here Saturday that the oil-for-food accord has proved it can provide humanitarian supplies to relieve the situation in sanctions-hit Iraq. "In spite of many problems, I would evaluate phase one as moderately successful," Staffan de Mistura, the outgoing coordinator for U.N. humanitarian affairs in Iraq, told journalists. He was referring to the first term of the oil-for-food deal, launched in December, which allows Iraq to export \$2 billion of crude every six months. Two-thirds of the revenue is used to finance food and medical imports. The deal "has succeeded in bringing 1.3 million tonnes of food and medicine," up from 85,000 tonnes in 1996, said Mr. De Mistura. "It has proven it can work."

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Arafat warns of new intifada if sanctions remain and asks world to pressure Israel

NABLUS (AFP) — Yasser Arafat warned Saturday of a new intifada, or uprising, in Palestinian areas if Israel does not lift crippling sanctions it imposed following last month's suicide bombings in Jerusalem.

"The Israelis should remember the seven long years of fighting under the intifada," said Mr. Arafat, referring to the violence that raged in Palestinian territories against Israeli forces between 1987 and 1993.

The intifada ended with signing of the Israeli-Palestinian peace accords in 1993, but Mr. Arafat said that "we are ready to wipe the slate clean and start over" to counter Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's hardline policies.

"Netanyahu still has to learn who he is dealing with," said the Palestinian president, who rejected any "Israeli dictates."

"We are ready to cooperate with Israel on security issues on condition that this cooperation is not unilateral, but we reject all dictates no matter who they are from."

Mr. Arafat said before a group of Palestinian intellectuals, artists and journalists gathered in Nablus.

He accused Mr. Netanyahu's government of not wanting peace and of launching "a real war" against the Palestinians to make them cave in to his demands.

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) made an urgent appeal to the international community Saturday to force Israel to lift sanctions imposed after the twin suicide bombings in Jerusalem on July 30 left 16 people dead.

A statement issued after a Palestinian cabinet meeting chaired by Mr. Arafat called for international intervention to "stop the collective punishment" imposed by Israel.

Israel sealed off the West Bank and Gaza Strip and froze the repayment of \$40 million owed to the PNA.

The Palestinian cabinet, which met overnight in Nablus, said the continued blockade "risks bringing famine and a shortage of medicine, and harming

medical care."

It accused Israel of "waging war on the Palestinian people instead of waging war on terrorism."

Mr. Arafat Friday protested to the U.S. over the havoc created by the sanctions, which the Palestinians say are costing their economy between \$6 million and \$9 million a day.

He told U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in a telephone call of the "very bad economic situation caused by the Israeli measures."

But Israel said Friday it was still waiting for a Palestinian offensive against anti-Israeli militants before it could lift the sanctions.

Israel's freeze in repayments of tax and customs duties collected for the Palestinians has meant that the PNA has been unable to pay July salaries to the 30,000 members of its security forces and most of its 80,000 civilian employees, a senior Palestinian official told Agence France Presse.

According to Israeli officials, some 80,000 Palestinian labourers and merchants who used to enter Israel

Palestinians buck sanctions by boycotting Israeli goods

RAMALLAH (AFP) — The Palestinians said Saturday they would fight back against tough Israeli economic sanctions with an intifada-style boycott of Israeli goods, to be launched next week.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat meanwhile said he would not bow to "Israeli dictates" that his security forces launch a wide-scale crackdown on Islamists who Israel claims are hiding in self-rule areas and planning bomb attacks.

Mohammad Rashid, one of Mr. Arafat's senior advisers, told journalists that the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) had decided to "gradually" impose a boycott on Israeli products in the Palestinian

territories, starting next week. Mr. Rashid said the ban aimed to push Israeli business to "lobby" Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to increase \$66 million in tax revenues he has refused to transfer to the cash-strapped PNA.

"We want to share with others the negative consequences of Netanyahu's decisions and those others are the Israeli suppliers and producers," Mr. Rashid said.

Mr. Arafat will consider a proposal on the details of the boycott on Sunday, but Mr. Rashid said it would be imposed "gradually and in relation to Israeli measures," product by product.

legally for jobs have been put out of work by the closure, as well as an estimated 30,000 more who entered illegally.

Thousands more workers

have been put out of jobs in the construction sector, one of the largest employers in the Gaza Strip, which has come to a complete halt due to the Israeli sanctions.



ACTION AT THE SPEED OF LIGHT: Abdul Nasser Mohammad Razeq (centre), Ala'a Jibril Aldaman Huri (right), Iyad Mohammad Ahmad Abu Sabab, three Palestinians charged with the murder of an Israeli taxi driver stand in court in the West Bank town of Jericho on Saturday. Razeq, 20, and Huri, 19, were sentenced to life with hard labour while Sabab, 17, was sentenced to 15 years (See story on page 2) (AFP photo)

Israeli planes rocket Palestinian base 16km off Lebanese capital

NAAMEH (AP) — Two Israeli fighter-bombers on Saturday rocketed a Palestinian guerrilla base south of Beirut, Lebanese security officials said.

In the second raid on the base in eight days, the planes fired two missiles at a hilltop depot of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command in Naameh, 16 kilo-

metres south of the capital on the Mediterranean coast, the officials said, speaking on condition of anonymity.

An Associated Press photographer who saw the air strike said there were no casualties.

The target appeared to be the entrance to concrete tunnels in which the group is believed to store weapons and equipment.

On August 8, Israeli fighter-bombers tried to attack the Naameh base, but their rockets slammed harmlessly into the hillsides.

The PFLP-GC, a hard-line group opposed to the peace process, issued no immediate comment on the raid.

In Israel, a spokesman for the defence force said he had no statement to make.

Israeli Jews could be invited to Syria soon — Arab deputy

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli-Arab deputy said Saturday that Israeli Jewish leaders "committed to peace" could soon be invited to Syria following his delegation's groundbreaking trip to Damascus.

"Our visit represents a precedent that I believe will be followed by a trip of Jewish leaders committed to peace," said Taleb Sanaa of the Arab Democratic Party, who returned to Israel Friday after a four-day visit to Damascus at the invitation of Syrian President Hafez Al Assad.

"I propose to Syrian officials that they invite Rabbi Ovadia Yosef because he could make a large contribution to peace," he said.

Mr. Yosef, spiritual leader of the ultra-Orthodox Shas Party, has repeatedly supported the return of occupied Arab land in exchange for peace.

The Israeli Arab delegation which included members of parliament said on its return that its visit to Syria had taken a serious step in the direction of peace and rejected criticism the trip sparked in Israel.

Israeli-Arabs, the descendants of Palestinians who stayed in the newly-created state of Israel in 1948, represent around 18 per cent of the Israeli population.

On-off peace talks between Israel and Syria have been completely frozen since February 1996 over the issue of the Golan Heights, which was captured by Israel in 1967.

3 Israeli MIAs in Lebanon buried in Syria — deputy

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Three Israeli soldiers who went missing in action in Lebanon 15 years ago are buried in a Damascus cemetery, an Israeli member of parliament who visited the Syrian capital last week said Friday. "I was informed [about the graves] by a Syrian official whom I cannot name and I will pass on this information to Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai," said Salah Tarif, a deputy from the opposition Labour Party. Mr. Tarif said that a Syrian Jew witnessed the burial of the three, who disappeared in 1982 during Israel's invasion of Lebanon. Mr. Tarif was part of a 50-strong delegation who visited Syria this month at the invitation of President Hafez Al Assad — the first time the Syria leader has hosted an official Israeli delegation. The Israeli group included five members of parliament. The father of one of the three soldiers who went missing during a tank battle in Lebanon told Israel Radio that he would not believe the trio were dead until their remains are handed over. "Various reports, including from the Red Cross, indicated that my son and his two fellow soldiers were seen alive after the battle and we still consider them missing in action," said Yona Baumei, father of Zakaria Baumei. "If they're dead, we want to receive their remains," he said.

'Great job,' astronauts told after capturing environmental satellite

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida (AP) — Space Shuttle Discovery's astronauts deftly snagged a satellite loaded with valuable data about earth's ozone layer on Saturday, accomplishing their final objective in orbit.

Scientists at Kennedy Space Centre cheered and congratulated one another once the satellite was back on board.

"Great job, discovery," mission control in Houston said.

The crew of six is due back with the satellite on Monday.

Nine days after releasing it to measure atmospheric gases, the astronauts closed in on the satellite using the same kind of approach that will be needed for the future space station. Then payload commander Jan Davis slowly reached out with Discovery's 15 metre robot arm and grabbed the probe as the spacecraft sped 290 kilometres above the Pacific Ocean just north of New Zealand.

In another station-building test, Astronaut Davis relied on remote camera views instead of a direct line of sight to lower the boxy, 3,490-kilogramme satellite into the shuttle cargo bay.

During its free flight, the German-built satellite collected enough data to fill more than a quarter-tonne of computer disks, said Robert Conway, a naval research laboratory scientist in charge of its ultraviolet telescope.

Virtually all the information was stored in the satellite. Only a tiny percentage was transmitted to ground controllers — just enough to show the instruments were working properly.

It will be at least a month before the satellite is unloaded and Dr. Conway and other scientists get their data.

(see picture on page 12)

Israeli army frees arrested Palestinian security agent

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Israeli army released Friday a Palestinian security agent who was shot at and beaten by Israeli soldiers as he pursued a smuggler near a Jewish settlement in the Gaza Strip, a Palestinian official said.

Colonel Khaled Abu Ula, head of the Palestinian liaison committee, said Khaled Najj, an agent of the military intelligence forces, was released from Israeli custody with his rifle fol-

lowing talks with Israeli liaison officials.

Mr. Najj was arrested Thursday evening near the Gush Katif bloc of settlements in the southern Gaza Strip by Israeli soldiers who claimed he opened fire on them.

Col. Abu Ula said it was established in the liaison meeting that agent Najj and two other Palestinian security agents were pursuing a smuggler near the settlement border and fired shots

into the air.

The Israeli soldiers then opened fire on them and Mr. Najj "immediately surrendered in order to prevent any incident," Col. Abu Ula said.

The soldiers then seized him and beat him before taking him into custody, he said.

"Israeli officials apologised for the beating and said it was uncalled for and promised to investigate," Col. Abu Ula said.

Mubarak accuses U.S. of not being evenhanded with Israel

CAIRO (AP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has accused the U.S. of not being evenhanded in its bid to revive peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians.

"The American administration is pressuring the Palestinians," Mr. Mubarak said in remarks

published Saturday in the newspaper Al-Ahram. "It should take a similar stance with the Israelis."

"Everybody is pressuring [Palestinian President Yasser] Arafat," Mr. Mubarak told Al-Ahram, "but pressure from one side does not solve the problem."

Indicating that such pressure weakened the PNA, Mr. Mubarak said, "if Mr. Arafat goes, terrible problems will erupt between the Palestinian organisations."

"There would not be another leader whom all Palestinians could rally around," he said.



First the bearskin hat, now the metal breast... what next?!

File photo of members of the Household Cavalry leading out the Queen's carriage as she leaves Buckingham Palace on her way to Westminster Palace for the State Opening of Parliament. The Ministry of Defence confirmed late Friday that the Household Division of mounted guardsmen may replace their metal breast and back plates with plastic ones, following three days after it emerged that the Army's Guards regiments had been asked to look at replacing the traditional bearskin hat with a synthetic version (AFP photo)



GRANDMOTHER BREAKS RECORD: British grandmother Jennifer Murray (left) celebrates with co-pilot Quentin Smith on completion of their record-breaking round-the-world helicopter flight in Denham Friday (see column 8 story on page 12) (AFP photo)

Egyptian Islamist leader urges reconciliation with government

King conveys best wishes to people of India

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein conveyed his greetings and best wishes to the president, prime minister and people of India, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of India's independence, according to an Embassy of India statement.

His Majesty's congratulatory message was yesterday conveyed to Indian Ambassador Gajanan Wakankar, by Chief Chamberlain to the Hashemite Court HRH Prince Ra'd Ben Zaid, at a meeting held at the Indian Embassy Residence.

Expressing his satisfaction that the traditional bond of friendship between Jordan and India has strengthened over the years, particularly in the political and economic spheres, HRH Prince Ra'd stated his hope that bilateral relations should, in the coming years, encompass all areas including culture and tourism, the statement said.

The Indian ambassador affirmed that King Hussein is held in very high esteem in India and that the King's role as "peace-maker" is also widely appreciated.

In India, the Golden Jubilee celebrations commenced August 15, 1997, at the stroke of midnight with a special session of the Indian Parliament in New Delhi to commemorate and recapture the spirit of the historic moment half a century ago, according to the statement.

People from all over the country enthusiastically participated in the festivities to mark the occasion. The 50th anniversary of India's independence was celebrated by the Indian community in Jordan on Friday.

The day was marked by a host of activities, organised by the Embassy of India along with the Indian Cultural Association, the statement said.

A flag-hoisting ceremony, followed by an open house, was held at the embassy premises in the morning. Over 250 Indians, along with their families, attended the function, according to the statement.



HRH Prince Ra'd Ben Zaid conveys His Majesty King Hussein's best wishes to Indian Ambassador Gajanan Wakankar on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of India's independence

AMMAN (J.T.) — The 38th training course of the Royal Command and Staff Academy was inaugurated Saturday. Deputy Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Lieutenant General Mohammad Salameh Hiwyan conveyed His Majesty King Hussein's greetings to participants. Arab and foreign officers are taking part.

AMMAN (Petra) — A Royal decree was issued on Saturday amending the Jordanian Economic and Social Organisation for Retired Servicemen (JESORS) Law. Another Royal decree was issued amending the administrative system of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources. A third decree was issued approving an organisational plan of government offices.

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan Telecommunications Company (JTC) will begin changing phone digits in the Irbid, Jerash, Ajloun, and Mafrqa governorates over the next few weeks. JTC Deputy President Walid Tayfour explained that Ajloun and Jerash governorate phone numbers will heretofore be comprised of seven digits instead of the current six and that the code number will be duly changed from 02 to 04.

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Health and Medical Care Ashraf Kurdi Saturday met with a U.S. delegation, currently visiting the Kingdom, to discuss American humanitarian assistance to Arab countries, particularly the occupied Palestinian territories and Iraq.

AMMAN (Petra) — President of Yarmouk University Marwan Kamal Saturday inspected excavations at the Hayyan site in Mafrqa. Dr Kamal was briefed on the historic and archaeological importance of the Hayyan area.

AMMAN (Petra) — The Anti-Narcotics Department Saturday announced the seizure of 22.67 kilograms of heroin, with an estimated street value of nearly JD1 million, as well as the arrest of two suspects.

Department Director Colonel Nazih Shreideh affirmed that his department was tipped that a Mercedes with foreign licence plates, driven by a foreigner, was transporting the drugs from a neighbouring country.

Anti-narcotics police surveyed the vehicle's movements from its entry into the Kingdom before the subsequent confiscation early Friday morning, he added.

The police seized the car in which the drugs were concealed in secreted compartments, according to Mr. Shreideh.

The driver was caught in the act of transferring the drugs to another person who intended to transfer the drugs to a neighbouring country, according to Col. Shreideh.

This year, the Anti-Narcotics Department handled 59 drug-trafficking cases, 20 of which occurred in Aqaba, and referred suspects to court for trial.

According to Col. Shreideh, his department has intensified border activities and surveys in order to thwart trafficking attempts by those who would use Jordanian territory to transfer drugs from producer to consumer countries.

Opium and heroin seized over the past year and eight months totalled more than the amount of these two drugs seized by the department over the past two decades, he said.

Meanwhile, the Customs Department Saturday reported the seizure of 12,000 cartons of foreign cigarettes smuggled into Jordan.

The department worked in coordination with the Anti-Corruption Department at the Public Security Department to confiscate the contraband.

A few days ago, customs teams seized 66,000 cartons of foreign cigarettes and arrested several persons suspected of involvement in their transportation.

Major Salameh Talab Kassab laid to rest

AMMAN (J.T.) — Major Salameh Talab Kassab, who Friday died in a road accident, while accompanying HRH Prince Rashid Ben Al Hassan from Wadi Araba to Aqaba, was Saturday laid to rest in the Royal Cemetery.

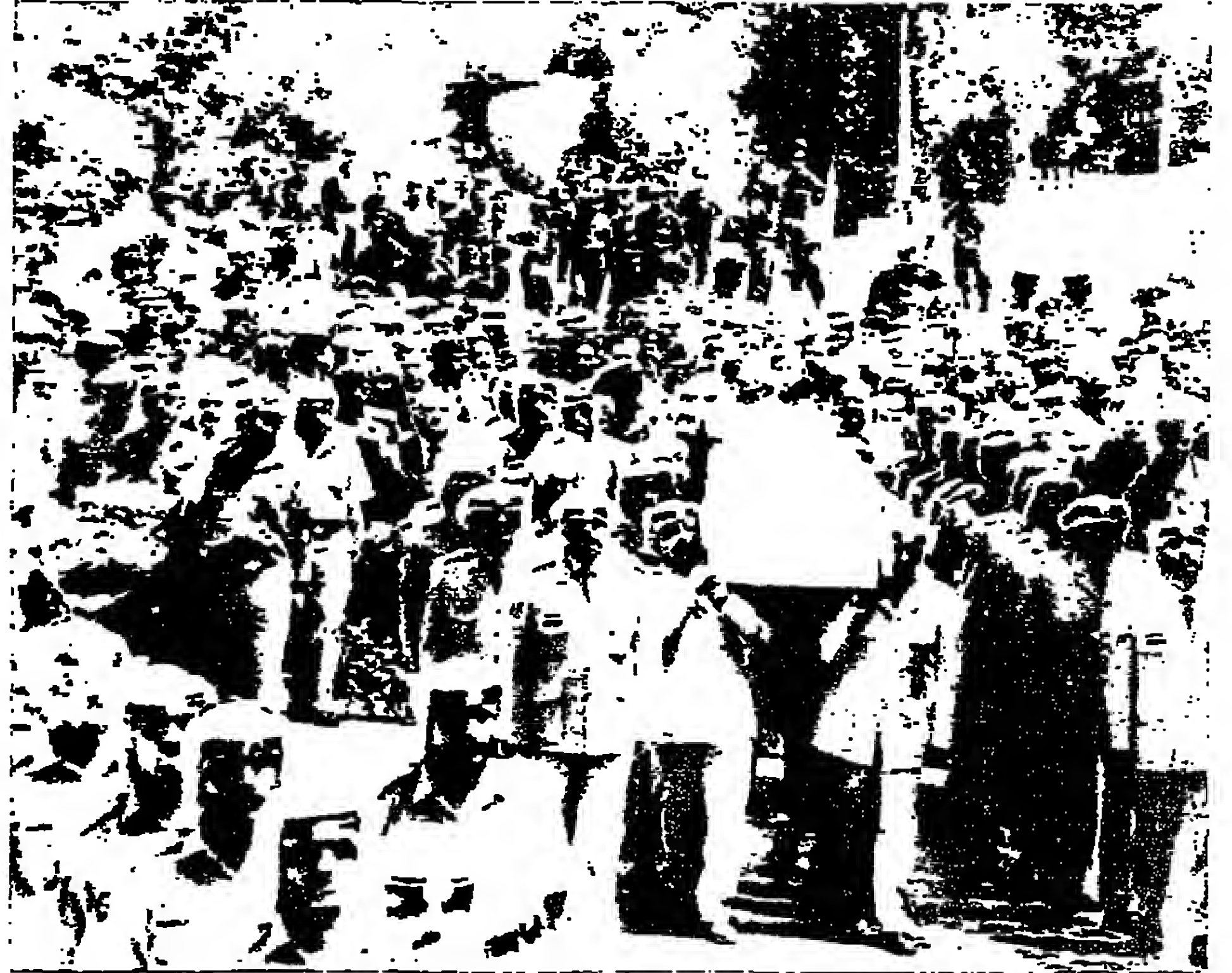
Prayers were performed at the Royal Guards' Mosque prior to the funeral ceremony.

HRH Crown Prince Hassan and Kassab family members accepted condolences from mourners. Prince Hassan expressed his deep grief over the loss of Maj. Kassab and stated that he regards the major's siblings and children as his own.

Prince Rashid was reported as recovering from injuries he sustained in the car accident which took the life of his aide-de-camp. Major Kassab, as well as a visiting American friend Mark Schmidt.

Another passenger, Zeid Omar Bdeir, was also slightly injured and is now recovering in hospital.

Maj. Kassab's funeral was attended by Their Royal Highnesses Crown



Major Salameh Talab Kassab is Saturday laid to rest in the Royal Cemetery (Petra photo)

Prince Hassan, Prince Faisal Ben Al Hussein, Prince Ra'd Ben Zaid, the Chief Chamberlain.

Prince Ali Ben Navef, Awn Khasawneh, His Majesty King Hussein's private secretary and other officials, including ministers and high ranking army officers.

Majali details outcome of King's visit with Israeli premier

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Saturday detailed the outcome of His Majesty King Hussein's meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Aqaba, in which place the two discussed recent developments of the Middle East peace process.

In a Cabinet session, Dr. Majali also covered the King's meetings at public rallies, in Ma'an and Aqaba.

The following is a summary of Saturday's Cabinet session as reported by Minister of State for Information Affairs Samir Mutawi:

Minister of Interior Nathir Rashid reported on the process of voter registration for the upcoming elections, scheduled for Nov. 4.

According to Mr. Rashid, the number of people who registered for the November elections exceeded expectations, and reached 383,890 by the evening of Aug. 15.

"The total number of eligible voters is expected to reach nearly two million Saturday, the last day for registration," he added.

Those who registered last week were either citizens, now of an eligible age of 19 to vote, or those who had not previously registered to vote (in the 1989 and the 1993 general elections).

A total of 1,501 million persons registered to vote in the 1993 elections.

Dialogue between the government and those political parties which have announced their intention to boycott the 1997 elections is expected to commence soon.

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright is slated to

visit the Middle East during the first week of September. In his talks with the Israeli prime minister, King Hussein emphasised that the peace process must not merely tackle security concerns at the expense of other related issues.

Minister of Justice Riyad Shakaa submitted an integrated, comprehensive plan of action for the modernisation of his ministry as well as the furnishing of the new Palace of Justice.

The Cabinet approved an agreement on maritime transport as well as an international transport agreement, signed by Qatar and Jordan last month.

The Council of Ministers authorised a joint declaration by Jordan and the European Free Trade Association on cooperation in several fields.

The agreement was initiated by Minister of Industry and Trade Hani Mulki during his visit to Geneva last June.

The Cabinet approved the registration of the Kuwaiti Society for Social Reform in Jordan and authorised Minister of Social Development Mohammad Mamser to sign the agreement on behalf of the Kingdom.

Upon Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Mohammad Saleh Horani's recommendation, the Cabinet approved a draft agreement between Jordan and a Greek energy centre within the framework of Euro-Mediterranean cooperation.

The Cabinet formed Jordan's delegation to participate in a Jordanian cultural and tourism week to be held in Paris at the end of this month.

It formed a second delegation to attend the opening of the Damascus International Fair, to be held between August 28 and September 9.

22 kilogrammes of heroin seized

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NEWS IN BRIEF

Training course inaugurated

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Royal decrees issued

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Senate speaker receives youth group

AMMAN (Petra) — Senate Speaker Zeid Rifai Saturday received a Jordanian youth delegation. Mr Rifai answered questions raised by the delegation members on various issues and reviewed Jordan's policies in regards to domestic and foreign concerns.

Mass wedding held

IRBID (Petra) — A mass wedding ceremony was held Friday in the Irbid Municipality Hall for eleven couples. The wedding ceremony, organised by Al Afaf Society, is the second to be held this year. Friday's ceremony was attended by several deputies and dignitaries.

Kurdi meets with U.S. delegation

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Yarmouk president inspects excavations

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WHAT'S GOING ON

JERASH FESTIVAL

* Seminar on Jerusalem with the participation of Hazem Nusseibeh, George Haddad, and Bahjat Abu Gharbiah at the Church Museum square at 6:30 p.m.

* Exhibitions on Jerusalem, tourism, environment, agriculture, handicrafts as well as slides on Jordan's touristic sites at the festival premises.

* Concert on Iraqi musical heritage by Hussein Al Azami at the

Main Theatre at 9:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* "Islamic Bookbinding Exhibition" at the British Council, Jabal Amman, until Aug. 31.

Zarqa Female Care and Rehabilitation Centre shelters, educates young women

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

ZARQA — Six months ago, Najah, 14, was coerced by her aunt to falsely testify against her father for financial reasons and he was arrested as a result.

Because of the guilt Najah felt regarding her false testimony, claiming her father had raped her, the following day, she withdrew her previous allegations.

The result was that she was charged with perjury and ordered detained to the Zarqa Female Care and Rehabilitation Centre (ZFCRC).

"I admit that I have [disgraced] my father and family, and now he is in prison because of me," Najah said.

According to Director of the Social Defence Department at the Ministry of Social Development Musa Safi, Najah was the victim of an unscrupulous aunt who took advantage of the girl's youth, and convinced her to lie for financial gain.

"The aunt fled to Europe and left the girl helpless," Mr. Safi said. "We at the centre are trying to provide her with a proper atmosphere until the court decides her fate."

Najah is one of nine women currently serving time at the ZFCRC, established in 1968 and affiliated with the Ministry of Social Development.

The centre annually houses between 65-70 female juveniles who have been sentenced for criminal behaviour, according to Mr. Safi.

"We consider each female as a victim of her social circumstances, and none of the women are treated as prisoners or felons," Mr. Safi explained.

Since the beginning of the year, he maintained, the centre, the only accredited juvenile institute for females in the Kingdom in compliance with the Juvenile Law, has accommodated 27 women.

"We have solved 18 of these cases and we are working on helping those currently residing in our centre," Mr. Safi asserted.

Mr. Safi described the case of Fatmeh, 18, one of three children abandoned by their parents, and forced to live with her paternal family who mistreated her.

"My parents were divorced, and my sisters and I were treated cruelly," Fatmeh explained. "We used to run away from home and so we were brought to this centre."

"During my stay here, and through the ZFCRC, a man has asked for my hand, and I am considering the matter," she added.

Women admitted to the centre benefit from special programmes, including literacy courses and vocational training such as working with textiles, weaving, and glass making, the ministry official said.

They are also allowed to continue their

scholastic education and meet with their families on holidays, he added.

"When a female is admitted to our centre, specialists conduct a study to review her family's history and attempt to formulate an adequate rehabilitation programme to prepare her for later societal involvement," Mr. Safi said.

Most cases, he maintained, involve theft, extramarital sexual relations, perjury, attempted murder, and, in some cases, females are hosted for protective purposes.

"In cases in which females are the victim of sexual assault or have engaged in extramarital sex, their lives are usually in danger from other family members, and our job is to protect them," he said.

Such juveniles are housed at the centre "to protect their lives and, in the meantime, a team of specialists endeavours to find safe alternatives for them," Mr. Safi stated.

The solutions, he explained, range from "either marrying the woman to her aggressor or finding foster parents."

In the former case, the victim remains under our supervision until we can ascertain the safety of her situation, Mr. Safi maintained.

In some cases, we negotiate with the family of the victim, and try to convince them that [sexual assault] is not their daughter's fault, and, if we feel that the victim's family response is positive and she will be safe, we return her to her family.

But such is not the case for 12-year old Kifaya who was convicted of engaging in sexual relations with her cousin, 32.

"We wanted to marry the minor to her cousin, but he refused, and her life is in danger as her uncles vow to kill her," Mr. Safi said.

He added that the father of the child understands that it is not his daughter's fault.

"We realise that, if released, [Kifaya's life] is under threat, so we have decided to keep her at our institute until we find a proper solution," Mr. Safi said.

Kifaya, who is illiterate, has been living in the centre for the past five months learning tailoring and weaving.

She described her future as dark.

"My relatives have threatened to kill me, and I do not know what is going to happen," she said. "I feel lost."

Mr. Safi also mentioned the case of a 15-year old girl, who is serving time at the centre for the attempted murder of her mother.

Salam's mother was mentally ill, according to Mr. Safi, and "the child told us that her mother, who was divorced by her father nine years ago, had had several relationships since that time."

"I decided to kill my mother to cleanse my family's honour because I saw her [engage in sexual relations] several times since I was six," Salam said. "I decided to burn her with

the encouragement and directives of my grandmother."

Salam, who lived with her father and visited her mother every week, said that several times she tried to prevent her 30-year mother from leaving the house, as she knew that her mother was seeing other men.

"My mother would not listen to me and would leave, and hours later, she would return and give us money," she said. "Then she would prepare good food for us to eat."

"My first fiancé left me due to my mother's conduct and I was fed up with the situation," she told the Jordan Times.

Salam, instructed by her grandmother, poured kerosene on mattresses in her mother's house, set one on fire, locked the door and left.

"My mother began to call for help, and was eventually rescued, and I was detained as a result," she said.

Mr. Safi stated that since the incident, Salam's mother dropped charges against her daughter, and her father decided to remarry her mother.

"Salam's father felt that it was his fault that he had abandoned his mentally ill wife and decided to reunite the family," Mr. Safi said.

* Names in this article have been changed for the protection of the women described herein.

China sends mixed signals to U.S. on U.N. reform

BEIJING (R) — China has sent mixed signals to the United States, pledging cooperation with Washington in the United Nations "in every aspect" but pouring cold water on U.S.-backed reform of the world body.

Using "good cop, bad cop" tactics, Chinese Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister Qian Qichen told Bill Richardson, the chief U.S. delegate to the United Nations, Friday that China was "ready to increase consultation and cooperation with the United States in every aspect, especially in U.N. Security Council work."

But Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxing told Mr. Richardson that reform of the United Nations was a "profound matter" that needed full and careful discussions.

"It is imperative that full and careful discussions be held and that an attempt be made to reach an agreement," the Xinhua News Agency quoted Mr. Li as saying.

"This reform cannot be done at a moment's notice," Mr. Li was quoted as saying. Mr. Richardson is in China

as part of a two-week, 10-nation tour mainly to lobby for reform of the United Nations, including admitting Japan as a permanent member of the Security Council and broadening the U.N.'s financial base.

The Council has five permanent members with veto power — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States.

China championed the cause of Third World nations.

"Any expansion of the Council should comply with a principle of equitable geographical distribution of member states," Mr. Li was quoted as saying.

Developing countries account for more than two-thirds of member states of the United Nations. Hence "any expansion should reflect their desires and also take their interests into consideration," Mr. Li was quoted as saying.

China slapped the United States on the wrist for failing to pay its U.N. dues.

"Timely and complete payment of U.N. dues is the obligation of every U.N. member, according to the

U.N. charter," Mr. Li said. China is concerned and worried about financial issues of the United Nations, especially a financial crisis in the long run, he said.

The U.S. Congress is considering paying \$819 million in U.S. arrears for peacekeeping, regular dues and voluntary contributions to U.N. agencies, about half of what the United States owes the world body.

But the funds are conditional upon many issues that require approval of the 185-member U.N. General Assembly, including lowering U.S. assessments and making arrangements to forgive the debt.

Many governments currently financing the United Nations, including Japan, Germany and other Europeans, oppose a reduction in U.S. payments until the arrears issue is settled.

China hinted its opposition to any raise in its own dues. Mr. Li said China is still a developing country and its per capita gross national product is relatively low, but that it has tried its best to contribute to the United Nations.

Greenpeace boosts protest on oil platform off Scotland

LONDON (AFP) — Four Greenpeace protesters scaled the anchor chains of an oil rig to join three others staging a protest over oil exploration in Atlantic waters west of the Shetland Islands off northern Scotland.

The environmental group said the four landed in inflatable boats and used climbing gear to clamber aboard the British Petroleum (BP) rig. They carried food and supplies and a tarpaulin to make a shelter.

Once they had established themselves, two climbers would stay for the night and two more would return to the Greenpeace support vessel, it said.

The activists aim to stop the rig Stena Dee moving towards BP's Foinaven Field, and Greenpeace said it was putting swimmers in the path of the rig whenever it moved, sometimes blocking it for hours at a time.

The fresh protesters arrived six days into an occupation of the rig by three others, camped in a survival capsule strapped to one of its legs.

The protest is the latest stage in the environmental group's protest at oil firms exploring the deep Atlantic waters west of Scotland, as the quest for fresh reserves of oil moves beyond the North Sea.

It claims that using even existing oil reserves will cause irreversible climate change, and campaigner Liz Pratt, aboard the Greenpeace support ship, said: "Future generations will suffer unless we get politicians and oil companies to listen to what we are saying."

N. Korea reports defection of S. Korean opposition member

SEOUL (R) — A prominent South Korean religious figure who is a member of the main opposition party has defected to North Korea, the Communist state's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) reported Saturday.

KCNA, monitored from Tokyo, said Oh Ik-Jae, former leader of the 130-year-old Chondokyo religious group, arrived in Pyongyang Friday by train for "permanent residence."

It did not say when he had defected from the South.

A spokeswoman for the main opposition National Congress for New Politics, Park Sun-Suck, said the party had not been able to confirm the report.

She said that although Mr. Oh still held party membership, he no longer had a for-

mal position in the party. She said he was an advisor to the party until May.

The National Congress issued a statement demanding the government investigate the matter.

"The party will also conduct an investigation, and if the report is true Mr. Oh will be expelled from the party," it said.

"It was extremely shocking to hear the report of Oh Ik-Jae's defection to the North and, if the report is true, it is very unfortunate and shameful to the Korean people."

A Seoul official who declined to be identified said by telephone that the government was investigating the matter to confirm whether Oh defected or was kidnapped by Pyongyang. The KCNA report said

Mr. Oh made a public statement at the railway station about his defection, praising North Korean leader Kim Jong-Il and criticising South Korean authorities.

"I think it is a boundless honour to have come to this wonderful society led by the great General Kim Jong-Il," Mr. Oh was quoted as saying.

"I will devote my remaining days to achieving the independent and peaceful reunification of the country at an early date through the great unity of the whole nation."

KCNA said Mr. Oh met North Korean Chondokyo religious delegates in Beijing in 1993 to try to reunify North and South Korea, which have been divided since the end of World War II.

Mr. Oh, 68, has served on the Advisory Council on Democratic and Peaceful Unification, a presidential advisory body. An official at the advisory body said Mr. Oh's term as advisor ended in June.

South Korean nationals must have government permission to travel to Communist North Korea. Travelling to Pyongyang without permission is forbidden.

A South Korean National Unification Ministry official said Mr. Oh had not sought permission to travel to the North.

The two Koreas are still technically at war. The U.S. has recently led fresh efforts to start formal talks on a permanent peace arrangement to replace the truce that ended the 1950-53 Korean conflict.

Clinton to visit India, Pakistan next year

WASHINGTON (AFP) — In a move reflecting heightened U.S. emphasis on South Asia, the White House said Friday that President Bill Clinton would travel to India and Pakistan next year.

First lady Hillary Clinton unveiled the plans at a gathering to celebrate 50 years of Indian independence from Britain.

Marsha Berry, a spokeswoman for Mrs. Clinton, told AFP that the trip will take place "at some point next year" and that no firm dates had yet been set.

Mr. Clinton will be the first U.S. president to visit South Asia since Jimmy Carter went to India in January 1978.

The announcement comes as the United States aims to step up diplomatic efforts with India and Pakistan through a series of high-level visits, officials say.

These will likely include travel by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to Islamabad and New Delhi "before the end of the year," one State Department official said this week.

Analysts here expect that Indian Prime

Minister Inder Kumar Gujral and Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif may soon visit Washington as well.

All of this, said one U.S. official, reflects an administration effort to "pay a lot more attention to South Asia in its second term... You have to have high-level attention to get your policy off the dime."

Keeping archrivals India and Pakistan from acquiring nuclear weapons, of which both are believed capable, is a key U.S. concern "but it's not our only interest," the official said, citing trade and environmental issues.

At a news conference last week, Mr. Clinton said the U.S. presence "should be heavily felt in South Asia because of the long relationship we've had with India... but also because of the enormous potential of South Asia for good if things go well and for ill if things don't."

"It's not a very hot issue here in the United States, but it's a source of continuing concern to me that the people of Pakistan and the people of India have not been able to work through their differences," he said.

Hungry North Korea grapples with drought

BEIJING (R) — North Korea, battered by two years of devastating floods, has been hit by the worst heatwave in 92 years, wiping out crops and driving the famine-stricken state closer to starvation, an aid worker said Saturday.

North Korea, already suffering severe food shortages, has had almost no rain since July, said Jon Valfells, media service head of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

About 70 per cent of the country's expected maize harvest or some 1.5-1.7 million tonnes has been lost, Valfells said after arriving in Beijing from a two-week visit to the North.

"They have never had a drought with temperatures so high since 1905," he said.

Temperatures soared to 36 degrees Celsius (97

degrees Fahrenheit), well above the seasonal average of 28 C (82 F), drying up reservoirs and large tracts of arable land, he said. Farmers uprooted corn stalks which had not matured to plant cabbages.

"I don't think we're optimistic," he said when asked if the situation could worsen. "The situation is not good... (but) there's not much you can do."

The drought is also threatening the key rice crop, which until now has been less severely affected.

North Korea has been relying on international donations since unprecedented flooding in 1995-96 left tens of thousands without food.

The federation has been distributing about 10,000 tonnes of food every month, feeding about 740,000 North Koreans.

Aid workers have said the food shortage caused by the floods had forced

many people to forage for wild grasses, tree bark, roots and berries to supplement their meagre daily grain rations of 100 grammes (3.5 ounces).

Visits to schools and hospitals across North Korea had turned up starving children with skin hanging loosely from their limbs and festering sores, aid workers say.

Bill Richardson, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, said in Tokyo Friday that North Korea's food crisis was growing worse and that Washington was likely to respond to any further appeals for food aid to North Korea.

The United States, a major food donor to North Korea, has provided \$52 million this year through the U.N. World Food Programme to help stave off a famine caused by two years of devastating floods compounded now by the drought.

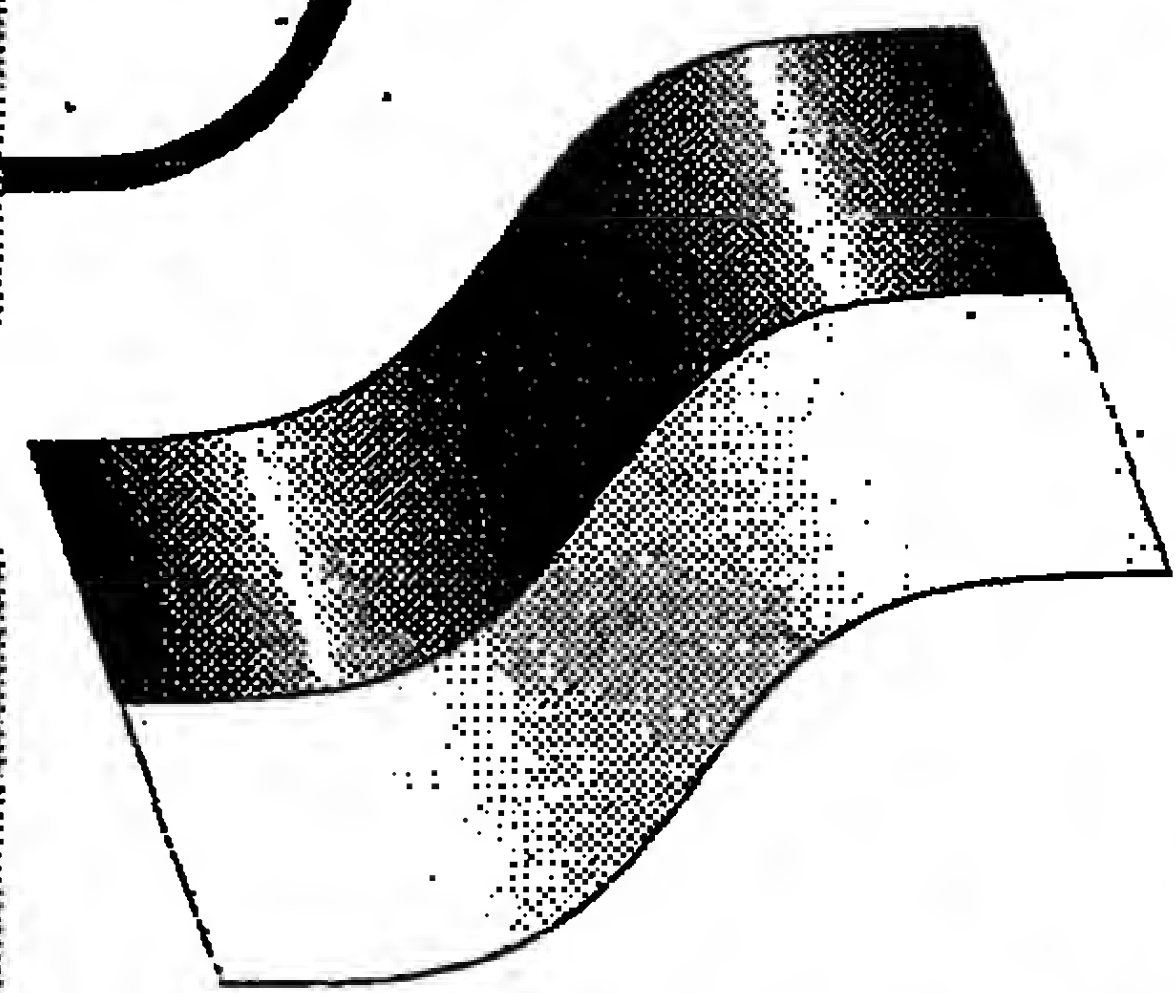
North Korea and Japan

announced Friday they plan preparatory talks at Tokyo's embassy in Beijing on Aug. 21 to set a schedule for long-stalled negotiations aimed at normalising diplomatic ties.

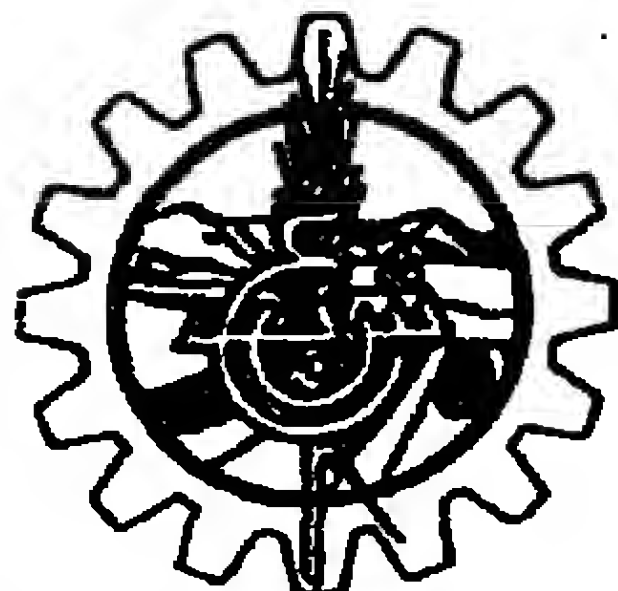
The normalisation talks have been stalled for five years over Japan's persistent demands that Pyongyang clear up allegations that North Korean agents kidnapped Japanese citizens in the 1970s and 1980s. Pyongyang vehemently denies the charges.

Tokyo has cited the abductions as the reason it refuses to join South Korea, the United States and international organisations in providing food aid to North Korea.

Japan, which controlled Korea as a colony from 1910-45, normalised relations with Pyongyang's bitter rival, Seoul, in 1965 but has yet to establish diplomatic ties with North Korea.



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AFFIRMING JORDANIAN FRIENDSHIP
AND HOPES OF CONTINUED
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Violence in Algeria must stop

THERE IS hardly a day that passes by without hearing about Algerian children, women and men being slaughtered. Only a few days ago 35 Algerians, again including children, had their throats slit in different regions of the north African country. Since June 5, when parliamentary elections were held, no less than 800 Algerians lost their lives in similar fashion. The toll on life since the aborted general elections of 1991 in which the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win is, of course, much greater. Thousands of people have been killed since the cycle of violence started, with no sign of it abating.

The presumption is that extremists in Algeria are behind these daily killings even though no faction has openly accepted responsibility for them. Equally important as the identification and punishment of the culprits is the silence of the international community towards the daily carnage, as if the lives of those butchered were not the least bit important. This callous attitude towards what is happening in the Arab north African country is shameful to say the least. All the talk about human rights and humanitarianism rings hollow when there is hardly a meaningful reaction to the atrocities in Algeria. Even the rhetoric against the massacres is muted in comparison with the reaction to the killing of innocent people elsewhere in the world.

What is taking place in Algeria is no longer an internal matter but a concern to all mankind. The protection of human rights is an international responsibility, and if the Algerian authorities cannot cope with the continuous threats to life in their country, then a greater international effort needs to be undertaken as the highest priority. For one reason or another the Algerian government appears helpless to end the sufferings of its citizens. One explanation could be a deficiency in the police and security tactics to combat terrorism. Outside forces may also be behind the killings, aiming to drive home a message or two. When all fails, the U.N. for example, is duty bound to "intervene" on behalf of the innocent children, men and women who are being sacrificed on the altar of Algerian politics.

The international monitoring of the Algerian scene could be helpful in ebbing the tide of bloody violence. Placing the Algerian situation on the agenda of various U.N. human rights bodies, especially the U.N. Commission on Human Rights, appears warranted. The upcoming session of the U.N. General Assembly in New York offers yet another opportunity to come to the rescue of the victimised Algerians. Whatever it takes to end the bloodshed in Algeria must therefore be taken and soon.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Arab Al Yawm said that despite the Jordanian-Israeli agreement on facilitating the exchange of trade between Jordan, on the one hand, and Israel and the Palestine self-rule areas, on the other, Israel continues to block trade in either direction. Marwan Hazine said that the trade accords concluded after the Jordan-Israel peace treaty in 1994 are not implemented because Israel places obstacles in its way with the intention of maintaining its domination on the Palestine economy. Jordan has raised this issue with the Israelis through a series of joint committee meetings and has been seeking to encourage trade that would benefit both parties, yet the Israelis fear that Jordanian goods, which are of high quality and made by cheaper labour, could flood the Palestinian markets and deprive the Israeli economy of its markets in the Palestine self-rule areas, said the writer. He said last year, Jordan was able to sell goods worth only \$16.5 million to the Palestinian territory when all indications point to the fact that such trade could be worth hundreds of millions, if the Israeli government opened up the borders to Jordanian goods, in implementation of the bilateral accords. The low-cost Jordanian goods can also find their way easily to the Israeli markets if the door is open for free trade between Jordan and the Jewish state, he added. As part of its obstruction of the peace process, said the writer, the Israeli government is blocking trade, delaying trucks on the bridges and crossing points and doing all it can to prevent trade, in disregard of the transport and trade agreements and in a determined manifestation of its anti-peace policies.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Government guarantees distort public finance

By Dr. Fahed Faneh

IT GOES without saying that the Ministry of Finance is not allowed to spend any amount of money unless covered by the approved budget. Disbursing funds without budget or in excess of the budget is a violation which was committed in the past; in that case, it would be covered retroactively by a budget supplement issued several years later. Supplement budgets after actual disbursements or commitments reduce the budget to a mere indicative document which is not binding to the government.

Having a real parliament as of 1989, the Kingdom was able to do away with the supplementary budgets meant to ratify payments made years before which were presented to the defunct parliament as a fait accompli. Parliaments at the time had no alternative but to approve the supplementary budgets because the extra expenditures were already incurred and had been paid for. Now we are back on the right track. Since the indebtedness crisis of 1988/1989 and as stipulated by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), we have binding budgets.

The fiscal reform is of course welcome but, unfortunately, it is not complete. The treasury is still able to exceed the budget and raise extra money to cover extra expenditures, losses and commitments that were not budgeted for. The way to do that is simply to issue a govern-

ment guarantee to enable public sector institutions to borrow from the banks.

Suppose that Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA), now a company, the Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ), the Royal Jordanian (RJ) airline or any other governmental corporation lost huge amounts of money which the government does not like to acknowledge and cover from the budget as subsidies. The solution is easy: those corporations are allowed to borrow the needed funds from the market under government guarantee.

It is common knowledge that such loans will never be repaid by the borrowers in most cases, because the corporations concerned incur more losses in the coming years, accumulate more deficit and need more loans and more government guarantees.

The purpose of a government guarantee is to defer payment so that the deficit in the central government budget appears at a future time, not during the reign of the incumbent government. The whole process is to carry forward problems and burdens.

If the parliament is not willing to allow funding of an ailing public corporation by public funds, the minister of finance can still get around the objection by granting it a government guarantee by virtue of which the corporation can get the money from the banks. When instalments

start to fall due, the ministry will be able to repay from amounts listed in the budget under debt service. Such amounts get easily to the budget, because government commitments must be honoured on time.

What I am trying to highlight is that a government guarantee is an easy way to bypass the parliament, exceed the budget and reduce deficit. Therefore, such guarantees must appear from now on in the budget and their value should be added to the deficit as well as to the internal public debt. What we are told about reduction of deficit or realising a surplus in the budget may be untrue if there are government guarantees which are not accounted for in the budget because they do not call for cash payments in the year they were issued.

In this year 1997, the government made a commitment under the IMF adjustment and stabilisation programme to reduce budget deficit before external grants to 3.1 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP). The ministry can honour this commitment by financing the losses of the public sector corporations through guarantees, to enable them to borrow locally rather than transfer cash. The other effective way of achieving the target of 3.1 per cent is to delay payments to contractors and suppliers, i.e., by carrying present commitments to future maturities. Both tactics are being used.

Suicide bombing happens 'when Palestinian popular frustration over Israeli failure to implement the accords is at its highest'

By Michael Jansen

THE ISRAELIS have had the propaganda running since the July 30 double suicide bombing at Mahane Yehuda market in central Jerusalem, blaming the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) not only for failing to take action against prospective bombers but also suggesting that the authority is harbouring and protecting such men with the aim of putting violent pressure on Israel to implement the Oslo accords. But nothing could be further from the truth.

Since the first Oslo accord was signed on Sept. 13, 1993, there have been 14 serious bombing incidents against Israelis. The Israeli authorities contend that these attacks are carried out by inveterate Islamist enemies of peace and that they often occur on the eve of progress in implementation. Not so. The bombers always struck at times of crisis, when Palestinian popular frustration over Israeli failure to implement the accords was at its highest and the ability of the PNA to take repressive measures against militants was reduced. Having discovered that the pattern of bombings was related to the ups-and-downs of the peace process, this writer also found that most bombings were carried out in response to specific Israeli provocations rather than "to destroy the peace process," as the Israelis claim. Furthermore, bombers often waited until the peace process was in

serious trouble to respond to a particular Israeli provocation.

"...most bombings were carried out in response to specific Israeli provocations rather than 'to destroy the peace process,' as the Israelis claim. Furthermore, bombers often waited until the peace process was in serious trouble to respond to a particular Israeli provocation."

This correspondent was present in Jerusalem, Jericho and Gaza on Sept. 13-14, 1993, for the signing of the first Oslo accord. The atmosphere was ecstatic, joyful, expectant. The vast majority of Palestinians believed the accord would bring the end of the occupation within an year's time, inaugurate limited self-rule and lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state in Gaza and almost all of the West Bank five years from the date of signing. And in their minds was etched the timetable published at the time of the signing.

Unfortunately, first Oslo was not implemented as expected. The accord came into force on Oct. 13 and on Dec. 13 the agreement on Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho was meant to be signed so the pullout could be completed by April 13, 1994. Instead, the two sides haggled inter-

minably over details and the first deadlines were ignored. This destroyed the

signed the second Cairo accord preparing the way for the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza-Jericho and the return of PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat to Palestine on July 1. The euphoria over this event obscured the fact that the Israelis should have "redeployed" from areas A and B, towns and villages, by June 23 so the Palestinian legislative elections could be held no later than July 13. This was to be followed by the dissolution of the Israeli military government. Since none of these things happened, the Oslo process began to sag once again and lose popular support. This was accelerated by sparring between Israel and Hamas, begun by Israel which killed two Hamas members in Jerusalem on Oct. 12. On Oct. 14, an Israeli soldier was kidnapped and killed during rescue. On Oct. 19, there was a bombing in Tel Aviv, which killed 22 Israelis and wounded 48 and on Nov. 12, a suicide bomber killed three Israeli soldiers in Gaza.

To put an end to this low level warfare Arafat instituted a massive crack-down against Hamas, precipitating riots in Gaza in mid-November. The peace process was stalled, no funds had flown into the PNA's coffers. On Dec. 25, another bomber struck in Jerusalem, wounding 12 Israelis.

1995. While Oslo stalled, Palestinian anger built over settler attempts to expand a Jerusalem area settlement; on Jan. 22, 1995, two

bombers attacked the Beit Lid junction in central Israel, killing 21. On April 9, two Palestinians blew themselves up outside two settlements in the Gaza Strip, killing seven Israeli soldiers and a U.S. citizen. The Oslo process remained deadlocked, stalled, stale-mated. On July 24, a bomber blew up a bus in Tel Aviv, killing six Israelis, wounding 28. Aug. 21, a bomber hit a bus in Jerusalem, killing four Israelis and one U.S. citizen, wounding 100. Meanwhile, the two sides were talking desperately, coming up with the second Oslo accord of Sept. 28, 1995, which detailed the implementation of the provisions of the original accord and established a new timetable.

In December, Israel "redeployed" from six of the seven West Bank towns. 1996. On Jan. 5 the Israelis assassinated Yahya Ayyash, the Hamas master bomber. Hamas threatened massive retaliation. But the peace process had momentum, and the Palestinians were preparing for the general election at the end of the month. Hamas bided its time. Following the Palestinian elections, the government of Shimon Peres, who succeeded the assassinated Yitzhak Rabin, put the Oslo process, including the March 28 Hebron redeployment, into the "deep freeze" until after Israeli election, called for the end of May. The peace process promptly fell into crisis.

On Feb. 25, two years after the Hebron mosque massacre, two bombs struck, one in Jerusalem and the other near Ashkelon, killing 23 Israelis, two U.S. citizens and one Palestinian. On March 3, another bomber attacked a bus in Jerusalem, killing 10 and wounding 10, and on March 4, a bomber blew himself up in central Tel Aviv, killing 12 and wounding 100. Arafat reacted by detaining 1,500 Hamas and Islamic Jihad activities. In May, Benjamin Netanyahu and the Likud won the election and brought the Oslo process to a complete halt but the bombers seemed to wait and see what he would do.

1997. On Jan. 15, Netanyahu and Arafat signed the Hebron protocol, permitting Israel's redeployment in the seventh town. Then Netanyahu destroyed the slight momentum generated by the implementation of the Hebron deal by proposing in early March a redeployment from a minuscule amount of territory and by beginning construction of the Jabal Abu Ghneim/Har Homa settlement on March 18. On March 21, a bomber killed himself and three women in a Tel Aviv café. The last incident, on July 30, took place close to the site of the first massive Jerusalem blast, on Jaffa Road in the western sector of the city. It coincided with the lowest ever level of Palestinian support for both the peace process and Arafat.

The Comoros — there is no going home again

By Gwynne Dyer

THERE IS no country in the world, sadder, poorer and less credible than the "Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros", but you have to give the people of these Indian Ocean islands credit. The Comorans have thought about their plight, and they have come up with a solution: they want to be reconsoled.

The Comorans are two-thirds of a million people living on three volcanic islands scattered across the Mozambique Channel between Africa and Madagascar. There used to be a fourth island in the group, but when the islands of Grand Comore, Anjouan and Moheli proudly voted for independence in 1975, the island of Mayotte cannily voted to stay with France. And thereby hangs a tale.

"There would be no problems on Anjouan if Mayotte were not there," said Prince Said Ali Kemal, a former finance minister in the Comoros government, after Anjouan secessionists declared their island "officially reattached to France" last week. Now the people of Moheli have

followed suit, hoisting the French tricolour and severing their links with the regime on Grand Comore. And the prince is right: it is all Mayotte's fault.

The 100,000 people on Mayotte have not been deliberately provocative, but their mere existence is profoundly destabilising for the neighbouring republic. As French citizens, the Mayottais enjoy free education, subsidised medical care and a minimum wage of over \$400 a month — which is around ten times the average income in the other three islands.

No wonder so many Comorans toy with the idea of going "home" to France's rule; it is harsh and miserable out there on their own, and the cosy option they gave up for independence is always there to haunt them. But what pushed the 200,000 people of Anjouan and Moheli over the edge was the perception that their country is governed in the sole interest of the biggest island, Grand Comore.

Most people are dirt-poor there too, but not President Mohammed Taki and his friends. Taki is so fond of going abroad on official visits that he is

known as "the pilot", and little of the sparse aid that reaches the Comoros gets past the president and his coterie of relatives and retainers. As for legitimacy — well, Taki came to power two years ago as the beneficiary of the 17th coup in the Comoros since 1975.

Like many of the other coups, it was planned and led by Bob Denard, a now aged French mercenary who was the real power behind the presidency for over half the Comoros' 22 years, of independence. Paris actually sent troops to arrest Denard after the 1995 coup, and he is now back in France, but Taki is still in power, and it is easy to see why Comorans have come to view the state with contempt.

Add in 90 per cent unemployment on the outer islands, and the surprise is only that it took so long for Anjouan and Moheli to try to break away from the Comoros and get back to France. (Grand Comore would probably vote for reannexation too, but that is where the army is, so nobody's going to ask them.)

When the crisis first broke last week, the Organisation of African

Unity moved with unusual speed to get a delegation onto the breakaway islands. It is not just horribly embarrassing for Africans to be demanding reconsoled. Breaking up an existing state is also a breach of the OAU's most fundamental rule: that former colonial borders must be preserved at all costs, to avoid endless wars of secession among Africa's 51 states. But so far, the OAU delegation has had no luck in talking to the secessionists out of their plans.

And what about the French? Are they moved by this display of affection and loyalty in their former colonial subjects? Certainly not. The French Foreign Ministry spokesman said: "We rejoice that the OAU has decided to appoint a special envoy to the Comoros," and added that "France respects the territorial integrity of the Islamic Federal Republic of the Comoros." In other words, the French welfare system has enough overseas clients already.

France has the largest remaining overseas empire of any of the European colonial powers. One and a half million

people live on islands and territories scattered around the Caribbean, South America, the Indian Ocean and the North Atlantic that are treated as integral parts of France (the "overseas departments"), and another half-million in "overseas territories", mostly in the South Pacific. In the former category — Martinique, Guadeloupe, French Guyana, Reunion, Mayotte, and St. Pierre and Miquelon — the residents enjoy all the rights of French citizenship.

The relationship makes no economic sense for France, which has to subsidise its overseas departments heavily in order to give them even the sketchiest approximation of a French standard of living. But it did make emotional sense for the French thirty, forty or fifty years ago, when the pain of being rejected and ejected by the rest of their empire was assuaged by the decision of these places to stay with the mother country (for a price).

It has always made excellent sense for the people of Guadeloupe, Guyana or Mayotte, who traded the doubtful joys of

a threadbare independence for the solid comforts of the French social services. Now, a generation further on, there are lots of other former French colonies that would gladly make the same choice, but the door is closed. The French have recovered from their post-imperial depression, and are not interested in buying further emotional solace.

Indeed, Paris is slashing the amount of money it spends on maintaining what General de Gaulle, thirty years ago, would have unashamedly called "la gloire" (literally, France's "glory"). In particular, France is making deep cuts in the number of troops it has traditionally based in its former colonies in Africa.

The places that made the choice to stay with France in the period 1946-1975 are home and dry, because they elect senators and deputies who are a significant element in the political system in Paris, but there will be no additions. Anjouan and Moheli can drape themselves in French flags, to their hearts' content, but they are condemned to independence.



The Komodo dragon, photographed by tourists who pose the threat of extinction to the carnivorous reptile (AFP photo)

Tourism threatens Komodo's dragons

KOMODO. — Indonesia (AFP) — The Komodo dragon, a distant cousin of the tyrannosaurus rex and one of the strangest, most deadly creatures to stalk the face of the planet has perhaps found its nemesis — the tourist.

The carnivorous king of reptiles, or varanus komodoensis, with its dietary preference for carrion, was first discovered by the scientific community in 1912 on the Indonesian island of Komodo, some 500 kilometres east of Bali.

Today, the Komodo dragon is classified as "a species in danger of extinction" with both Indonesian and foreign scientists attempting to raise the fierce lizard in captivity and study ways to protect it.

Tourism to Komodo Island is perhaps the greatest threat to the species.

The dragon, which can reach lengths from snout to tail of three metres and weigh some 50 kilograms, has had to adapt to an environmental imbalance caused by such activities as increased breeding of deer as part of efforts by locals to draw more tourists to see the famed lizard.

"The practice of baiting Komodo dragons encouraged a considerable number of Komodo dragons to become dependent on the weekly feeds, thereby disrupting their natural behaviour and habituating them to the presence of humans," said British scientist Ronald J. Lilley, working with the World Wide Fund for Nature's Indonesia programme.

"The smaller females in the group at the feeding site are excluded from this food source and consequently become less fit for breeding," he added.

The dragon can generally hold its own with such defences as its poisonous bite and tail that is often used as a flail. Its lumbering and sleepy appearance is also deceiving and conceals an ability to move at speeds which allow it to bring down large prey such as deer and buffalo.

Exposure to tourism and man has put its mark on the

species; an estimated 7,000 dragons lived on five islands in 1971 and now just 4,000 inhabit the islands of Komodo, Rinca and Gili Motang.

Every day, half a dozen boats ply their way to Komodo's pier to unload groups of tourists from other popular destinations like Bali, Lombok or Flores.

Guides lead them on foot to areas where they are "guaranteed" to see the dragons during feeding time.

The tourist trade has also brought many Indonesians to the island seeking a share of the profits despite official regulations against further settlement of the 30,000

hectare island where the population has grown from fewer than 600 to more than 700 in recent years.

Environmental pressure on the dragon is likely to get worse with improved transportation to the island which must currently be reached by a day's travel over rough seas.

Many of the boats plying the routes around Komodo are capable of delivering 100 people at a time.

Not far off the island, on Flores, some 40 kilometres away, local authorities have decided to build a new airport, making it possible to visit Komodo from Bali in about half a day.

Scientists seem to have

conceded defeat in the main battle to save the Komodo dragon and are focusing now on saving what is left of the species, with five programmes on raising the animals in captivity, says Mr. Lilley.

If the programmes in Indonesia and the United States are successful, they could soon become capable of reintroducing the Komodo dragon to the uninhabited island of Padar, which would be off-limits to tourists.

"A planned captive breeding and reintroduction facility on Padar will provide the base for serious long-term scientific studies on dragon ecology," he said.

Colossal continental shifts may have spurred explosion in species

By Kathy Sawyer

WASHINGTON — A colossal shift in the Earth's mass half a billion years ago caused continents to migrate rapidly from frigid polar regions to the steamy tropics, and vice versa, scientists report in a global upheaval that may help explain an astonishingly sudden increase in the diversity of living creatures on the planet.

The dramatic discovery that the world's geography rotated 90 degrees at the same historical moment when evolution suddenly accelerated was presented by researchers at the California Institute of Technology who based their conclusion on an unprecedented analysis of the magnetic fields of rocks collected over 20 years worldwide.

If confirmed, the findings could provide a long-sought explanation for an event in Earth's history known as the "Cambrian Explosion." During this period the planet experienced a biological "big bang" that has never been repeated. New types of animals emerged at rates more than 20 times normal, leaving the first fossil records of virtually every sort of swimming, flying or crawling animal that exists today.

But scientists have been baffled about the cause.

The new findings, described in the most recent issue of Science, indicate that the evolutionary surge coincided with an equally unique shift of the major land masses, which briefly travelled at speeds hundreds of times faster than anything seen in recent history. Within the relatively short span of 15

million years, regions that had been at the north and south poles relocated to the equator, and two points on opposite sides of the equator became the new poles.

These massive changes would have produced traumatic alterations in regional climates and, the researchers theorise, could have broken up broad existing communities of creatures into smaller, more inbred ecosystems, where animals are known to evolve more rapidly and efficiently.

The idea that the geological upheaval might have influenced the biological one, "just fits nicely," said Joseph Kirschvink, the geologist who led the research. "It's a radical idea, admittedly, but it can be tested."

Geomagnetic studies of samples show that, beginning about 534 million years ago, the ancient supercontinent known as Gondwanaland (from which South America, Africa, India, Australia, New Zealand, and other lands are derived) rotated counter-clockwise almost 90 degrees. In the same period, North America likewise migrated from a position near the South Pole to straddle the equator.

On the eve of this global movement, violent earthquakes had been tearing continents asunder and slamming them back together, throwing up towering volcanic mountain ranges at the seams. About 550 million years ago, Mr. Kirschvink speculates, there must have been a particularly large "crunch event" that sutured bits of many continents together while a

huge chunk of the sea's floor sank, casting up a new volcanic range near the South Pole.

Like a wedge of gum stuck on the underside of a child's toy top, this huge cold slab of rock apparently was enough to throw the planet's mass distribution off kilter.

Such an event apparently triggered a process known as "true polar wander," which is quite different from the well-known ongoing process of movement in the Earth's crust called tectonic motion. Mr. Kirschvink said. Tectonic motion is driven by heat convection inside the planet, which moves giant crystal plates a few inches per year, triggering earthquakes and volcanic activity.

By contrast, polar wander is driven by an imbalance in the planet-wide distribution of mass relative to its spin axis. Any spinning body "tries" to place its fattest part at its equator, as is evident in the shape of a toy top. In Earth's case, once the imbalance developed, the land masses apparently sped across the planet's face at speeds well over several feet per year as the planet tried to "right" its balance.

"Earth has followed a 'plate-tectonic' speed limit" for the past 200 million years or so, said David Evans, a California Institute of Technology graduate and a co-author of the paper, "with nothing approaching the velocities needed for this early Cambrian reorganisation."

The link to the Cambrian explosion of life is speculative. Existing life forms would have been forced to cope with rapidly changing climatic conditions, the team

asserts, as tropical lands slid into the cold polar regions, and cold lands heated up.

The global shifts could have disrupted regional ecosystems, breaking them into more isolated communities.

Mr. Kirschvink suggested. Studies have shown that "evolutionary innovations are much more likely to survive in a small inbreeding population," he noted.

Even the slightest change in ocean currents can have a dramatic effect on regional climates, noted Robert Ripperdan, co-author and a geochemist at the University of Puerto Rico.

The global shift could explain another mystery of the Cambrian period — large swings in the ocean's record of carbon deposits. Mr. Ripperdan said. "No one could think of a mechanism" to explain this, he said. Under the new theory, "all of the evidence suddenly makes sense."

If the ocean circulation system was changing every million years or so, as the geological record indicates, that would leave enough time for the process of natural selection to produce new animal adaptations, the researchers suggest.

"Then, wham! They're hit again and the process repeats itself," Mr. Kirschvink said. "That is a great script for increasing diversity."

Other scientists said the Kirschvink hypothesis is as startling, and as intriguing, as the theory that some kind of impact led to the extinction of the dinosaurs — a theory at first dismissed but now widely accepted.

Washington Post

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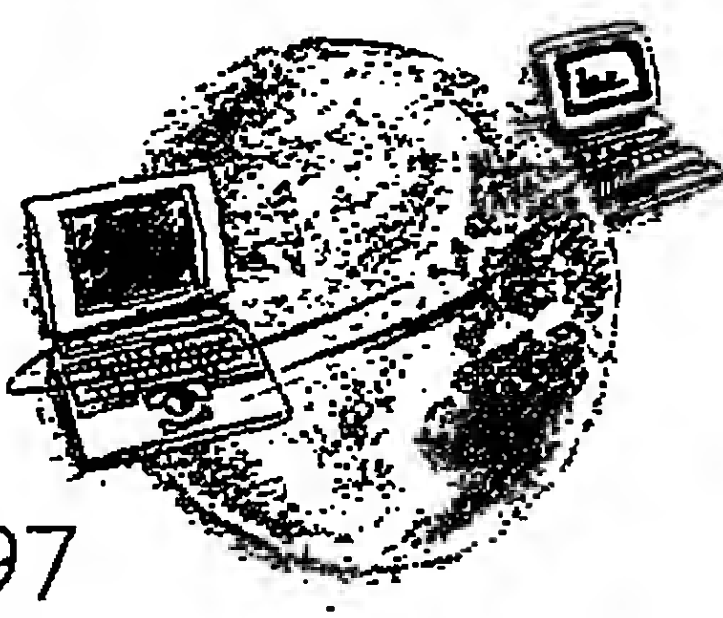
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Oman weighs more Eurobond borrowing

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Oman is considering more Eurobonds to finance economic reforms after a successful operation early this year, a senior Omani official said Saturday.

Finance Ministry Undersecretary Darwish Al Balushi said Oman had already raised \$250 million in a single Eurobond flotation at a fixed interest rate, which will mature in the year 2001.

"Concerning a new Eurobond issue, this depends on some factors," Mr. Balushi told the United Arab Emirates business weekly Emirates Today.

"What is important is that

we entered the international bond market to be there. So, it is not a matter of only one issue and it is over."

Mr. Balushi did not mention when new bonds would be issued or the targeted sum, which is needed to fund privatisation and other reforms.

Oman, a small non-OPEC oil producer, is the first Gulf Arab state to resort to Eurobonds although it borrows frequently from the domestic market. Its total foreign debt is estimated at between \$2.5 billion and \$3 billion.

Mr. Balushi said Eurobond issues would not affect domestic borrowing

as the government plans this year to issue new bonds for local investors worth 118 million riyals (\$306.8 million).

"Oman's entry into the international bond market was not basically intended to raise \$250 million," he said, referring to the issue in March.

"The main goal was that Oman wanted to present itself and its economic experiment and achievements to the world as we are switching from an economy based on the government and oil to a diversified economy, where the private sector has the main role and more foreign capital is

attracted." Mr. Balushi said Oman had slashed public investment from 2.7 billion riyals (\$7.02 billion) in the fourth five-year development plan to 500 million riyals (\$1.3 billion) in the fifth plan to encourage private investment.

"The fifth plan was based on the fact that private investment will increase and there will be profitable projects," he said.

"There are six large projects in the pipeline, including gas liquefaction, aluminium, sewage and other ventures. These will activate private savings," said the official.

Iranian economy still dogged by inflation

TEHRAN (R) — Iran's economy is stuck with double-digit inflation despite government success in reining in an official rate of nearly 50 per cent just two years ago.

Retail prices for food and consumer goods in Tehran Friday indicated the government may have difficulty in reaching its target of pushing inflation below 20 per cent for the current Iranian year which ends in March 1998.

Inflation — together with unemployment — are the main economic concerns of ordinary Iranians and both issues will have to be tackled by Iran's new President Mohammad Khatami.

President Khatami, who was sworn into office on Aug. 4 after his landslide election victory in May, said this week he would move quickly to address Iran's economic plight.

So strong has been the rise in local prices that Tehran, a city of more than seven million, has become the world's 35th most expensive city, according to a survey released this

month by the Swiss-based Corporate Resources Group.

Tehran was the world's second cheapest city just two years ago, according to the same study.

Inflation in the last Iranian year to March 1997, which is based on prices of a basket of commodities and goods, officially stood at 23.2 per cent against 49.4 per cent the year before, according to Central Bank Governor Mohsen Nourbakhsh.

Iran in 1994 set up wide-ranging price controls but economists say most consumers are obliged to buy needed goods at higher black-market prices to avoid having to queue for articles at official prices which are in short supply.

"Prices are still going up especially for those goods which are exported. Even when the government increases our salary, the shopkeepers just put up the prices," said one housewife whose husband's state salary is 500,000 riyals (\$167) a month.

House prices, rents and transport are all on the up

and with less than five months of the Iranian calendar complete, prices are already posting high double-digit growth.

Meat, vegetable and fruit prices reflect this trend. Apples at a municipal market in Tehran selling at 1,300 riyals (43 U.S. cents) a kilogramme Friday up 14 per cent on this time last year.

Despite ample supplies of vegetables and fruit, prices have continued to rise since March and are expected to climb further in the coming months.

"As it gets closer to autumn, the prices will increase because there is less food available," said Abolfazl, a stall-owner at the market said.

Meat prices are also rising strongly and shoppers complained of a lack of quality meat. Red meat has increased to 15,000 riyals a kilogramme from 12,000 riyals in March — a rise of 25 per cent — while chicken fetched 7,000 riyals compared to 4,500 riyals, one shopper said.

Prices for new and sec-

ond-hand cars also continue to appreciate strongly.

"Since the start of the year (in March) average prices of cars have increased by an average of 10 per cent regardless of whether they are new, old, imported or made locally," said Gholam Rezaei, an inspector at Tehran's central car market.

The rial's value on the Tehran's illegal currency market has not escaped inflationary pressures with street dealers quoting a rate of 4,700 riyals to the dollar Friday, up on 4,600 in January.

The dollar had risen recently to a high of 4,800 riyals but was still weaker than the 4,900 level it reached at the end of 1996. The official exchange rate is 3,000 riyals to the dollar and government also has rate of 1,750 riyals for its budget accounts.

"The rial has weakened because there's more demand for dollars as more people are travelling abroad at the moment," said one street dealer.

Indian economy risks stagnating if reforms stall — ADB

FUKUOKA, Japan (AFP) — The Asian Development Bank (ADB) said Sunday that Indian markets were still "highly distorted" and the economy risked stagnating if initial reforms stalled.

India has had "much less success" than China in recent years, the Manila-based bank said in a special study to mark its 30th anniversary. India has also "lagged behind the countries of east and

southeast Asia in both growth and poverty alleviation."

"Historically, India's economic strategy differed widely from that of its east and southeast Asian neighbours, with much greater state control of production and distribution," it said.

"Low investment productivity resulted from India's planning strategy, which was characterised by the distrust of the price mechanism. A

preference for administrative controls and a belief in self-reliance that negated the efficient use of foreign trade and technology."

The report noted the Indian reform process, begun in 1991, initially focussed on achieving macroeconomic stabilisation through fiscal adjustment and improved balance of payments management.

"To this end, the authorities

have eased financial sector controls, strengthened prudential regulation and reduced trade restrictions.

"However, in each of these cases, the reforms have been modest at best. Markets for land, labour and capital are still highly distorted, many government officials continue to be lukewarm about foreign investment and the transaction costs for investors remain high.

REUTERS

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The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	FRF	ESP
US Dollar	-	1.8670	0.6334	1.5279	116.34	1.3930	1821.91	21025	6.2912
DE Mark	0.5356	-	0.3389	0.8182	62.30	0.7458	975.43	1.1262	3.3696
GB Sterling	1.5789	2.9480	-	2.4083	183.26	2.1994	2874.97	3.3177	9.9275
CH Franc	0.6545	122.15	0.4145	-	76.12	0.9120	1182.04	137.48	4.1162
JP Yen	0.0086	1.6033	0.5437	1.3109	-	1.1963	15.85	180.55	5.4025
CA Dollar	0.7179	1.3393	0.4547	1.0957	1.20	-	1306.90	1.5087	4.5125
IT Lira	0.0005	1.0243	0.3474	0.8838	1567.64	0.7843	-	11.54	3.4516
NL Guilder	0.4758	88.75	0.3010	72.60	55.31	0.6623	866.13	-	2.9908
FR Franc	0.1590	0.2968	0.1006	24.2540	18.48	0.2213	33.41	33.4100	-

Middle Eastern Currencies									
Currency	USD	GBR	SAR	BAH	QAT	KUW	AED	LBP	EGP
US Dollar	-	0.7080	3.7505	0.3770	3.6398	0.3053	3.6726	1539.00	3.3920
Jordan Dinar	1.4124	-	5.2973	0.5325	5.1410	0.4312	5.1873	2173.73	4.7910
Saudi Riyal	0.2666	0.1888	-	0.1005	0.97	0.0814	0.98	410.35	0.9044
Bahrain Dinar	2.65	1.8780	9.9483	-	9.65	0.8098	9.74	4082.23	8.9973
Qatar Dinar	0.2747	0.1945	1.0304	1.0304	-	0.0639	1.01	422.83	0.9319
Kuwait Dinar	3.2755	2.3195	12.2846	1.2349	11.92	-	12.03	5040.94	0.9319
Emirates Dinar	0.2723	0.1928	1.0212	0.1027	0.9911	0.0831	-	419.05	0.9236
Lebanese 1000	0.65	0.4600	2.4370	0.2450	2.3650	0.1984	2.3684	-	2.2040
Egyptian	0.2948	0.2087	1.0507	0.1111	1.0731	0.8900	1.0827	453.71	-

Energy		Unit	Price
Brent	18.95	18.59	
W. Texas	19.95	19.70	
Bonny	18.95	18.59	
Dubai	17.30	17.36	
UL Gas	210.00	210.00	

Mid-East Currencies		Unit	Price
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4981	0.16887
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.50682	0.17245
KW Dinar	3.2755	6.11995	2.07469
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.8954	1.68011
CY Pound	1.8178	3.394	1.151

Metal Prices		Unit	Price
Gold (oz's)	325.9	326.4	
Silver (oz's)	4.41	4.43	
Platinum (oz's)	434	437	
AL (3 Months)	1721	1724	
CU (3 Months)	2278	2283	
Zinc (3 Months)	1483	1488	
Lead (3 Months)	601	603	
Ni (3 Months)	6720	6740	

Main Equity Indices		Index	Value	Change	High	Low	Open
New York	DOW JONES	8048.41	-13.7	-0.17	8095.56	8043.06	8062.11
New York	S&P 500	336.62	-0.38	-0.04	342.99	336.22	337
London	FT-SE 100	5075.8	43.9	0.87	5078.2	5041.9	5031.9
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	19099.11	274.93	1.46	19257.2	18917.5	18824.2
Paris	CAC 40	2998.57	15.13	0.51	3012.97	2982.94	2983.44
Frankfurt	DAX	4363.09	29.96	0.69	4372.29	4346.95	4333.13

Energy		Unit	Price
Coffee (c/lbs)	192	Spot	
Cocoa (\$/ton)	1523	Spot	
Sugar (\$/ton)	343.3	Spot	
Wheat (\$/ton)	148	Spot	
Soya (c/lbs)	21.5	Spot	
Tea (c/lbs)	165	Spot	
Barley (\$/bush)	0	Spot	
Rice (\$/ton)	480	Spot	

JOD Cross Rates		Unit	Price
US Dollar	0.708	0.710	
GB Sterling	1.1235	1.1291	
DE Mark	0.3794	0.3813	
CH Franc	0.4635	0.4656	
FR Franc	0.1126	0.1132	
JP Yen	0.0805	0.08125	
NL Guilder	0.3368	0.3385	
IT Lira	0.3891	0.391	

Puzzle solved:		Across	Down
FROM	APAR	SPRAG	
LADE	NAPA	CROCE	
ASIS	UNIT	ROUTE	
THE	HORSE	MOUTH	
KAY	OLD		
ASHCAN	TELL	BAH	
STOOP	DEED	SARA	
PREVIOUSLY	OWNED		
EIME	LETS	RIATA	
NAS	CITY	HAMLET	
TOV	PAL		
PREHENSILE	TAIL		
TRINE	ILET	AGRA	
VOTER	LATE	REAR	
SPATE	EGAD	TEND	

Puzzle solved:		Across	Down
5 Cat with spots	6 Wise lawgiver	7 Muslim prince	8 Obtains
9 Previous to	10 Purloined	11 June grad's award	12 Assist
13 Melody	21 Different	22 Sch. gps.	24 Cupid
25 Book size	26 June grad's goal?	27 Duck deceiver	28 Gen. Bohemian
29 Uncanny	30 Ruby and Sandra	31 Some horses	32 Actor Andrews
35 Annie Oakley	36 FDR chat site	38 Scorch	39 Seaweed
41 Weensy leader	42 Personal alarm	44 Nez	45 Sound of laughter
46 Bradley or Sharif	47 Chaise	48 Carry	49 Contract, as the brow
50 Bakery worker	51 What's in a -7	53 Fast jet	

Puzzle solved:		Across	Down
1 Jezebel's spouse	2 Type type	3 Newsman	4 Carrot-tops
5 Cat with spots	6 Wise lawgiver	7 Muslim prince	8 Obtains
9 Previous to	10 Purloined	11 June grad's award	12 Assist
13 Melody	21 Different	22 Sch. gps.	24 Cupid
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HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUN. DAY, AUGUST 17

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Committee finds irregularities in the construction sector

A JOINT committee from the associations of engineers and contractors has recently inspected 185 projects under implementation and was shocked to find out that 155 of the projects were being implemented by contractors who were not classified. The committee also found that only 20 resident engineers were found on the sites of the projects.

The council of the association considers this as a worrying situation as it shows the extent of dereliction in construction projects at the private sectors in terms of implementation and supervision. Hosni Abu Ghida, the Engineers Association vice president said, "This matter presses the council and the concerned parties to intervene to put an end to this negative phenomenon," he stressed noting that the findings of the committee clearly show the extent of dereliction and circumvention regarding the laws and regulations.

The vice president revealed that the council of the association has actually started to take practical and tough measures to come out of this fact and put an end to the dangerous violations in cooperation with the Association of Contractors and the National Building Committee. He explained that both associations are presently working on a new draft regulation to control the construction sector in the private sector (Al Dustour).

Government awarded 1,500 tenders valued at JD196m in '96

THE GOVERNMENT awarded 1,500 tenders for a total value of JD196 million last year, the director general of the Government Tenders Directorate has said. Of the total amount, JD37.7 million were for roads, JD78 million for buildings, JD50.9 million for water and sewerage, JD19.5 million for electro-mechanical works and JD19.9 million for other projects.

According to the annual report, the volume of work in the transport sector amounted to JD48.2 million and in the education sector to JD11.7 million. The health and energy sectors followed with JD19.1 million and JD4.3 million respectively. The housing sector's share was JD2.8 million with defence and security taking JD6.3 million.

Amman had the largest volume of work with a JD75.6 million total. It was followed by Irbid at JD59.2 million, Ma'an at JD11.5 million, Balqa and Karak each at JD10.8 million and Aqaba taking JD6.3 million. Tafleh and Madaba trailed the list at JD3.5 million and JD2.8 million respectively (Al Dustour).

Mulki denies floating prices of local and imported cigarettes

INDUSTRY, TRADE and Supply Minister Hani Mulki denied that the prices of cigarettes were floated from Friday, Aug. 15. Dr. Mulki said the ministry is studying the floating of prices of local and imported cigarettes but no date has yet been fixed for the floating. He explained that a decision to this effect is linked to the volume of cigarettes stocked at the ministry's warehouses and to the capability of local production to compete (Al Ra'i).

Four companies publish mid-year financial results Jordan Phosphate Mines Company posts sharp fall in net profit

By Samir Ghawi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Despite many attempts to contact senior officials of the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPMC) to obtain clarification about the significant drop in sales, gross income and net profit of the major firm, the Jordan Times was unsuccessful in finding anyone who was willing to explain the poor performance in the first half of this year.

According to the balance sheet and profit and loss statement sent to the Amman Financial Market as of June 30, 1997, JPMC posted a JD12.71 million gross income compared to JD25.08 million during the first half of 1996. The decline was a direct result of a large drop in sales which went down from JD117.81 at the end of June 1996 to JD106.36 million at the end of June 1997.

Sales of the phosphate unit and the fertiliser unit were JD66.28 million and JD40.07 million respectively during the first half of this year, the financial statements showed without giving comparative figures.

After taking into account other income as well as administrative and selling expenses, the net profit plunged to a low of JD3.89 million after having been at JD12.49 million at the end of June 1996.

The net profit of the phosphate unit actually stood at JD5.89 million but the amount fell to JD3.89 million as a result of a JD2 million loss posted by the fertiliser unit.

A quick analysis of the balance sheet shows that inventories of finished products were the main factor behind a rise of current assets from JD137.16 million at the end of last year to JD144.63 million at the end of this year's first half. Other assets that included investments, payments on work in progress and spare parts as well as some supplies increased from JD104.96 million to JD114.12 million.

The total of fixed assets declined from JD148.65 million to JD143.57 million at the end of June 1997. In terms of current liabilities, short-term loans and bank credits increased to JD35.32 million and JD47.52 million from JD30.72 million and JD41.32 million respectively at the end of 1996. Loans

against export credits and other payables also increased to JD9.81 million (JD7.71 million) and to JD15.80 million (JD9.80 million).

Shareholders' equity remained unchanged at JD185.62 million.

In addition to the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company the following three other companies this week published mid-year financial results:

The United Company for Financial Investment

Net profit generated by the company during the first half of this year amounted to JD30.298 but of this amount JD17.184 were retained earnings. However, the operations and profitability of the company registered higher figures during the month of July after the closing of June 30, 1997.

The company earned a total of JD55.666 in brokerage fees before administrative and general expenses reduced the figure to a net profit of JD18.317.

Current assets at the end of June 30, 1997 totalled JD1.17 million, of which JD250,000 were cash on hand and at banks, JD0.39 million in receivables, JD0.33 million in intangible assets and JD186.649 worth of shares portfolio.

The liabilities were a minimal JD134.675 of payables as most funds were concentrated in capital and various reserves in addition to retained earnings for a total of JD1.08 million.

The Middle East Insurance Company

The high profit posted by the department of general accidents had a major effect on reversing the decline in profits posted by other insurance departments. Combined, the total profit climbed from JD0.39 million to JD0.46 million at the end of June 1997.

By adding other income from investment returns, bank interest and profit from share trading, the company's total income rose to JD0.58 million but ended with a JD0.42 million net profit after deducting various administrative and general expenses. Net profit at the end of last year's first half stood at JD0.40 million.

At the end of June 1997, the company's assets totalled JD12.07 million (JD11.94 million in 1996). Of this amount, JD0.20 million were the value of fixed assets as the rest were mainly in cash for JD2.20 million, receivable for JD3.06 million and various investments, including real estate, for JD6.43 million.

There were no bank credits during the two periods, but other payables amounted to JD1.34 million (JD1.27 million in 1996). Reserves for unpaid claims totalled JD3.80 million which, after accounting for the share of the reinsurers, declined to JD2.43 million.

Other liabilities increased by JD150,000 to reach JD0.85 million and, consequently, raised the total current liabilities to JD4.61 million (JD4.07 million in 1996).

The United Insurance Company

The loss of JD368,377 posted by the department of vehicles during the first half of this year compared to a JD129,410 profit at the end of June 1996, dragged the other departments for a combined loss amounting to JD170,597 (a JD329,516 profit in 1996).

After taking into consideration investment returns, interest, other income and various expenses, the company ended up with a JD76,354 net loss after having posted a JD0.42 million net profit during the first half of 1996.

The company's main assets were cash on hand and at banks for about JD1 million, receivables for approximately JD2.5 million, deposits and bonds as well as investments in shares for a total of JD1.5 million and real estate investments amounting to JD3.20 million.

Current liabilities totalled JD3.21 million (JD2.39 million in 1996) and included bank credits which increased from JD0.3 million to reach JD1.05 million at the end of June 1997.

Technical reserves and shareholders equity closed at JD1.53 million and JD2.14 million as of June 30, 1997 compared to JD2.46 million and JD2.93 million respectively at the end of June 1996.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER - AMMAN - SHOGISANT											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 16/08/1997											
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P / R	DIV.	NO. OF FRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED JD	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	
298,000	219,000	ARAB BANK	13.4	1.38	14	440	127630	290.50	290.50	-	
2,340	1,480	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	2	7.10	7	5981	12211	2.05	2.04	-01	
5,800	4,100	CATRO AMMAN BANK	11.3	2.75	1	200	1090	5.45	5.45	-	
2,480	2,150	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	8.6	7.25	13	8180	18960	2.34	2.33	-01	
5,200	4,300	THE HOUSING BK.	24.3	4.04	2	1500	7250	6.80	6.80	-	
4,180	2,400	JOR. KUNAT BANK	10.8	0.00	9	56880	17383	3.03	3.03	-02	
1,050	760	JOR. GULF BANK	4.6	8.97	10	48000	37600	7.78	7.78	-01	
4,050	3,480	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	15.5	3.24	12	1042	3982	3.86	3.82	-04	
BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 214.61 %CHG: -0.07											
2,230	1,590	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	4.6	12.20	1	400	656	1.64	1.64	-	
2,860	1,990	JORDAN GULF INSUR.	9	0.00	1	500	1160	2.22	2.32	-11	
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 113.89 %CHG: +0.31											
1,820	1,500	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	8.1	5.99	9	3879	6463	1.66	1.67	-01	
1,540	1,320	JOR. ELECTRICITY	9.6	7.10	7	2000	3569	1.56	1.56	-08	
7,500	6,000	VEHICLES OWNERS FED.	7.2	5.30	1	100	660	6.60	6.60	-	
1,850	930	NATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	3	175	238	1.37	1.37	-	
8,830	4,850	ALBA	17.2	7.35	1	350	2386	6.85	6.85	-05	
1,870	1,150	WIL. EAST HOTELS	12.2	0.00	2	500	102	1.55	1.55	-	
3,720	2,890	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	8.0	0.00	3	8100	24786	3.05	3.06	-01	
1,220	930	ZAKKA EDUCATION	9	0.00	5	11000	10890	.98	.98	-	
2,230	1,610	UNIFIED CB.	8.5	6.15	14	15450	37655	1.79	1.79	-	
1,010	.640	UNION LAND DEV.	9	0.00	1	250	170	.67	.68	-01	
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 110.04 %CHG: +0.09											
4,450	3,220	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	26.9	2.75	42	43147	172437	4.00	4.00	-	
4,140	2,710	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	11.0	2.53	8	51307	20126	3.56	3.56	-	
7,050	5,100	ARAB POTASH CO.	14.2	3.28	6	3870	23605	6.25	6.10	-15	
10,250	9,040	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	9.8	8.83	50	11528	116112	9.98	10.07	-09	
1,470	1,050	MOULIN INDUSTRIES	10.9	7.84	7	2350	2959	1.24	1.28	-02	
3,740	2,610	INDUSTRIAL COM. AGR.	9.9	0.00	12	7750	4878	1.73	1.80	-07	
7,150	5,800	JOR. WORESTED MILLS	9.5	3.39	8	16050	94695	5.90	5.90	-	
4,160	3,040	ARAB PHARM. IND.	11.3	4.88	25	5910	24228	4.11	4.10	-01	
1,800	1,310	JOR. PAPER MANUF.	6	6.65	3	665	868	1.31	1.31	-	
10,250	5,000	ARAB CHEN. BYPROD.	17.1	5.39	1	100	557	5.30	5.57	-27	
5,650	4,000	DAR ALDIAA DV. INV.	13.2	4.63	1	100	540	5.35	5.40	-05	
3,850	2,400	ARAB ALUM. IND.	5.7	10.33	6	1550	3740	2.41	2.42	-01	
4,960	4,450	NATL. IND. & COUNTRY	9	0.00	13	24350	13151	.46	.47	-01	
.770	.510	NATIONAL INDUS.	0	0.00	6	5400	2754	.51	.51	-	
1,210	.510	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	5	2250	1260	.56	.56	-	
.980	.530	JOR. ROCKWELL TDS.	9	0.00	6	5400	3565	.67	.67	-	
.920	.530	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	9	0.00	5	2250	1260	.63	.62	-01	
1,430	.730	KAWTHER INVEST.	72.9	0.00	15	14250	10345	.74	.74	-	
1,270	1,080	UNIV. WOOD INDUS.	9	7.20	43	13500	17110	1.25	1.28	-03	
1,510	.990	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	16.0	9.62	12	2112	2704	1.03	1.04	-01	
1,620	1,300	NATL. CHLORINE	14.9	4.43	8	3215	5058	1.57	1.58	-02	
1,070	.810	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	15.9	0.00	14	13550	11676	.86	.87	-01	
1,290	1,340	JOR. PAPER REAR	94.5	0.00	8	1950	3655	1.59	1.59	-	
1,230	1,080	INTL. TOBACCO	6.3	0.00	6	1750	2030	1.15	1.15	-01	
1,200	.860	UNION CH. & VEG.	43.6	0.00	3	1550	1488	.95	.96	-01	
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 122.27 %CHG: -0.92											
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 164.57 %CHG: -0.38											
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 16/08/1997											
+.630	.350	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	9	0.00	1	1150	391	.35	.34	-01	
+.650	.430	JOR. TRADE PNC.	10.9	0.00	7	9500	3895	.42	.41	-01	
+.950	.440	JOR. FIN. INV. CO.	9	0.00	14	8413	4629	.56	.56	-	
+.840	.660	UNION INV. 501	9	0.00	1	4950	990	.70	.70	-	
+.570	.710	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	9	4100	2400	.41	.41	-	
+.950	.720	AL-SHARQ INV. CO.	9	0.00	17	91720	78879	.86	.86	-	
+.950	.610	AL-DARTAR 751	66.2	0.00	8	53250	23330	.68	.69	-01	
+.730	.510	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	8	2500	1050	.52	.53	-01	
+.570	.380	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	47.2	0.00	11	21500	8578	.40	.41	-01	
+.750	.400	NATL. MOUL. ENG. WAREHO.	9	0.00	23	17500	8090	.48	.47	-01	
+.830	.710	JORDAN STEEL	35.7	6.33	7	2527	1972	.77	.79	-02	
+.730	.580	MID-EAST PHARM. 751	9	0.00	2	2000	770	.64	.62	-01	
+.190	.860	UNION TOBACCO 751	9	0.00	8	5650	4017	.96	.97	-01	
+.570	.320	INDUS. ENG.	9	0.00	2	300	99	.34	.33	-01	
+.850	.730	INDUS. CERAMIC	19.1	0.00	6	2500	1625	.73	.73	-	
+.1000	.730	NAT. ALUMINUM 751	9	0.00	5	5250	2625	.75	.75	-	
+.860	.590	MID-EAST COMPLEX	7.9	15.63	6	7000	4480	.64	.64	-	
GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 129 241410 148071											
+ : New 12 months high											
+ : New 12 months low											
+ : Listed during the past 12 months											
P : P/E ratio is 100 or more											
S : Negative P/E											
E : Earnings is zero or N/A for the most recent year											

Bruguera, Krajicek upset in ATP quarter-finals

NEW HAVEN, Connecticut (AFP) — Sergi Bruguera and Richard Krajicek were both upset in the quarter-finals of the Pilot Pen International here Friday.

But top seed Yevgeny Kafelnikov rallied to hold off a strong challenge from Britain's Tim Henman and former champion Petr Korda survived four match points to beat David Wheaton.

Second seeded Bruguera found the aggressive net play of Australia's Patrick Rafter too strong to handle and fell 7-5 2-6 6-2. The number eight seed next tackled big-serving Briton Greg Rusedski, who eliminated fourth seed Krajicek 7-6(7-5) 3-6 6-3.

Kafelnikov plays Korda for a place in the final after he beat Henman 5-7 6-3 6-4. Fifth seeded Korda battled for two hours 45 minutes before overcoming Wheaton 4-6 7-6(9-7) 6-4 to reach the semi-finals for the third time.

The Czech faced elimination in straight sets as Wheaton held one match point at 5-4, two more at 6-5, and another in the tiebreaker.

The unseeded American also led the tiebreaker 5-1 before Korda rallied. In the final set games went with serve until 5-4, when a relieved Korda broke for victory.

"It's good to win a match like this, when you're four match points down and the guy is serving and playing really well. I kept positive and kept fighting," said Korda, who won the title in 1991.

"He was playing without pressure, but the pressure came in the tiebreak. He got tight and, I don't want to say I took control, but I didn't give up. I was trying to put everything in and it was a struggle."

Kafelnikov used his steady groundstrokes to overcome some aggressive serving and confident net play from seventh seeded Henman. He also held off ten of 12 break points.



Sergi Bruguera

The British number one showed his class when he hit a sharply-angled cross court winner to break and lead the first set 6-5. That was enough to give him the set, but Henman double-faulted to allow Kafelnikov a break for 4-2 in the second set, and the

Russian held off four break points after breaking to lead 1-0 in the decider.

Rusedski scored his second upset in two days by ousting former Wimbledon champion Krajicek. On Thursday, he over-turned sixth seed Albert

Costa. Two of the biggest servers in the game fired 32 aces between them, and one serve from 11th seeded Rusedski cracked the 140 mph (225 kph) mark, establishing him alongside Mark Philippoussis as the only players that have served at over 140 mph.

Basketball team to play in Lebanon ahead of Asian Championship

By Aileen Bannayan
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — While the Jordan Basketball Federation (JBF) was seriously contemplating dropping participation in the Sept. 11-19 Men's Asian Championship in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, officials are now organising a training camp for team in Lebanon.

After receiving JD 7,000 from the Ministry of Culture and Youth, the team will play a series of matches probably against Al Riyadi, Al Hikmah and Tadamon clubs in Beirut next week.

According to officials, if a sponsorship deal goes ahead with Aramex, the team will also play in the Mreimn Tournament in Beirut Aug. 21-24 and will be joined by Al Jazireh's players when they play against top Lebanese clubs — Kahraba, Antranig and Mon La Salle in the four-day event.

The JBF has been facing a financial problem and cancelled the women's participation in the Asian Championship in Bangkok earlier in the year.

With most of its allocated budget spent on the women's and men's participation in the Pan-Arab Games the JBF had to appeal to the ministry to secure funding.

The cash-strapped federation have dropped the option of a training camp in East Europe or hosting teams in Amman, and if Aramex are eventually come through as sponsors the team will play with that logo in Riyadh, according to JBF secretary Mohammad Nabil.

The team is now undergoing intense practice under new coach Imad Al Saeed after the JBF relieved the Ukrainian

coach of his duties following the team's sixth place finish at the recently-concluded Pan-Arab Games in Beirut.

The federation seems to have dropped the issue of cancelling participation in Riyadh as that would entail penalties by the Asian Basketball Confederation (ABC) especially after Jordan and Iran automatically qualified. Both teams took the two allocated slots following the withdrawal of Iraq and Syria from the West Asia pre-qualifiers which were due to be held in Tehran, Iran earlier this month.

Sixteen teams will be playing in Riyadh. The top five from the last championship and the hosts qualify automatically. There will also be two teams from each of the ABC's five regional zones.

Up to seven teams are eligible to contest qualifiers in the future as the West Asia zone also includes Palestine, Yemen and Lebanon, but the three are out this year since they have not paid their dues to the ABC.

Minor changes are expected on the lineup with top players like Hilal Barakat, Naser Bushnaq, Marwan Ma'touq and Yousef Zaghloul, missing the lineup.

Following the Pan-Arab Games, Mahmoud Sha'ban, Marwan Saeedi, Naser Bassam and Jan Sahlieh left for varied reasons and the JBF named Ramez Hammoudeh, Ghaidh Ennabi, Nihad Madi and Ala' Bilbeissi as replacements. They will join Zeid Alkhas, Ma'an Odeh, Yousef Abu Bakr, Naser Alawneh, Faisal Nsour, Ayman Du'yes, Naser Bassam and Fadi Saqqa.

Hodde slams attitude of Premiership clubs

LONDON (AFP) — England coach Glenn Hodde has hit out at clubs that he feels are undermining his bid to qualify for next year's World Cup finals.

This weekend's Premiership fixtures have been cancelled because of the large number of World Cup qualifiers next week, although England do not have a game.

But Hodde has been refused permission by Premier League chairmen to keep his players with him on the Thursday after midweek internationals.

"Chairmen and supporters want their clubs to be successful and rightly so," said Hodde.

"But I've never stopped an international player going to an international get-together because I've played for my country."

Unfortunately, some people haven't played international football."

His comments will be seen as a veiled attack on clubs like Liverpool — who withdrew Steve McManaman and Robbie Fowler from the Tournoi de France in June.

Hodde cited the example of world champions Brazil — who have just completed a tour of the far east, having already won the Copa America and played in the Tournoi this summer — as one England should follow.

The Brazilian league season has already started, but the Brazilian-based players are still with the national squad.

Hodde said: "If that was happening in England, people would be up in arms about it."

"But Brazil are serious about winning the World Cup again 100 per cent over the clubs."



Bulgarian striker Emil Kostadinov jumps over Trifon Ivanov during the practice of the Bulgarian soccer team in Sofia. Bulgaria need to win another three points against Israel on Wednesday in Sofia to get closer to the top of World Cup qualifying Group 5 (Reuters photo)

Olympic champion Bellutti wins pursuit gold at World Cup

ADELAIDE (AFP) — Italian Olympic champion Antonella Bellutti made a rush trip from altitude training in Bolivia to snare gold in the women's 3,000-metre individual pursuit event at the World Cup here Saturday.

Bellutti had little trouble in taking the gold medal ride-off from American Karen Kurrek.

Bellutti clocked 3min 38.51secs in her final, beating Kurrek by nearly eight seconds.

"I feel much better this afternoon," said Bellutti,

who arrived here only Friday after a long trip from her high-altitude training camp in Bolivia.

Bellutti's time set a new track record, taking about five seconds off the mark set last September by Australian Lucy Tyler-Sharman.

Tyler-Sharman will be one of Bellutti's main rivals in the pursuit at the World Championships in Perth later this month.

South African Jean-Pierre Van Zyl beat Latvian Ainars Kilis 2-0 in the ride-off for the men's sprint gold, while

Canadian Tanya Dubnicoff downed compatriot Lori-Ann Muenzer 2-0 in their women's sprint final.

Atlanta Olympics bronze medalist Stuart O'Grady of Australia won the men's 30-kilometre points race with 34 points from Denmark's Jakob Piil on 32 and Glen Thomson of New Zealand taking the bronze on 31.

New Zealand won the men's team pursuit gold from the United States in 4:12.73.

SPORTS IN BRIEF

Segers returns to Wolves

WOLVERHAMPTON (AFP) — Dutch goalkeeper Hans Segers is set to join Wolverhampton Wanderers on a one-year contract following his acquittal on match-fixing charges last week. The former Wimbledon player is wanted by Wolves manager, Mark McGhee, as back-up to current first choice Mike Stowell. The 35-year-old Segers joined Wolves initially on a non-contract basis last season and was on the substitutes bench on several occasions and impressed in the reserves. McGhee revealed on Saturday: "I have spoken to Hans to find out what he wants and I hope he will be back with us next week. I have still to speak to the chairman but the plan is to give him a contract until the end of the season."

Dalglish snaps up rush

LONDON (AFP) — Newcastle United Manager Kenny Dalglish snapped up former Liverpool teammate Ian Rush on a free transfer Thursday, barely 48 hours after bringing another Anfield old boy, John Barnes, to Tyneside. After prising the 36-year-old rush from Leeds United on a one-year contract, Dalglish joked: "We are developing our youth policy," he added: "There are no problems. The deal is done and he will be registered to play in Europe. There will be a full press conference on

Monday when we will introduce Ian and John Barnes." Wales international Rush, Liverpool's all-time record goalscorer, made 42 appearances for Leeds last year but scored just three goals. In a glittering career on Merseyside, he won five championships, three FA cups, five league cups and one European Cup Winner's medal. As well as linking up again with Barnes, rush, who could play in Newcastle's Champions Cup return with Croatia Zagreb, will also renew his acquaintance with another former Liverpool hero in Peter Beardsley.

May signs 6-year contract

LONDON (AFP) — Manchester United David May signed a six-year contract on Friday as manager Alex Ferguson ensured another of his young players stay at the club till well into next century. The 27-year-old central defender, currently sidelined by a thigh injury, rubber-stamped a deal that will put him alongside Old Trafford's big-earners as Ferguson added another name to the list of stars tied to the champions by long-term agreements. Only last week, Norwegian striker Ole Gunnar Solskjaer sealed a seven-year contract after an impressive first season with United, while the likes of David Beckham, Roy Keane, Ryan Giggs, Paul Scholes, Gary and Phil Neville and Nicky Butt have previously signed contracts that will keep them at Old Trafford well into the new millennium.

Johnson, Fredericks at Student Games

PALERMO (AFP) — American track star Michael Johnson, Namibia's Frankie Fredericks and Jamaican sprint queen Merlene Ottey are to run in a special event at the world Student Games in Sicily.

The "World Sprint Festival" on August 30-31 in Catania will feature most of the top sprinters from the World Championships in Athens.

Johnson, who took the 400m title in Greece, will run the men's 200m on Saturday against compatriot Dennis Mitchell, while Ottey faces old rival Gwen Torrence in the women's 100m.

Torrence will also run the women's 200m on Sunday against Zhanna Pintusevich, the Ukrainian 200m world champion and 100m silver medalist, while Fredericks, Mitchell and Leroy Burrell meet for the men's 100m.

TODAY AT

CINEMA

TEL:634144

PHILADELPHIA "1"

Steven Spielberg's

THE LOST WORLD (JURASSIC PARK)

Starring: Jeff Goldblum & Julian Moore

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA

TEL:634144

PHILADELPHIA "2"

Jim Carrey ... in

LIAR LIAR

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA

TEL:699238

PLAZA

THE SUBSTITUTE

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA

TEL:677420

CONCORD

CONCORD "1" The movie event of the summer is here Arnold Schwarzenegger ... in BATMAN & ROBIN (12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30)

CONCORD "2" Jim Carrey...in DUMB & DUMBER

Shows: 3:30, 6:00 only

Nabil & Hisham's Theatre

TEL: 625155

The satirical play

AMN AI AI YA HO

performance starts at 8:30 p.m. The theatre is closed every Friday.

For reservations call 625155

Sports

Swimming

By Roufan Nahha

The Jordan Swimming Federation (JSF) is currently receiving applications from teams for the 1997-98 season. The JSF Vice-President, Mr. Youssef Zaghloul, said that the JSF will continue to support the sport and will continue to receive applications from teams for the 1997-98 season.

Woodforde

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Swimming federation eyes long-term plan for national teams

By Roufan Nahhas
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN— The Jordan Swimming Federation (JSF) is currently focusing its efforts on preparing a competitive team for the 2000 Sydney Olympics by concentrating on promising athletes, JSF Vice-President Jaqueline Khouri Saturday told the Jordan Times.

"We found out that the younger generation is more committed to the sport and the federation's agenda. We will continue our support and commitment to those young swimmers," she added.

The swimming team came back from the 8th Pan-Arab Games which were held in Beirut with only one bronze medal won by Hana Majjaj.

"Lack of competitive experience led the team to earn only one bronze medal," Khouri pointed out.

"Our swimmers are 14-16 years old and they faced 20-25-year-old veteran swimmers from other countries," she said. "Experience usually counts in this case."

The federation is looking forward to having a well-trained team to represent the Kingdom in the next Olympic Games.

Khouri said plans for a swimming pool

which will be utilised only by the national team are still on paper waiting for the financial support.

The federation is, however, hopeful after many new records were registered by the Kingdom's swimmers in the recently-concluded Clubs Swimming Championship.

However, a conflict between the JSF and Al Orthodox Club resulted in the absence of Al Orthodox Club's swimmers from the championship and deprived them of a chance to take their share of medals.

The JSF Thursday took the decision of dismissing Al Orthodox coach Khamis Ghaith from the federation's technical and national team's committees "for the role he played in undermining the championship and creating problems between the federation and Al Orthodox Club," according to a JSF press release.

"In the absence of the Orthodox swimmers, Al Hussein Youth City's and Al Ahli's swimmers had more chances to register new records," Khouri said.

Loai Haqi clocked 26:72 seconds in the 50m freestyle; Omar Dallal who was lately training in Canada set new records with 2:24:15 in the 200m and 18:24:75 in the 1500m freestyle; Loai Madi won the 100 metres freestyle with

a time of 59:81 seconds which was later broken by Loai Haqi with 59:01 seconds.

Al Orthodox's decision of not taking part in the championship came amid a request of having a neutral swimming pool and to allow separate competitions for age groups.

Since a limited number of facilities exist for the competitions, the JSF countered Al Orthodox's claim noting that if the Crown Hotel's swimming pool is not up to the official specifications no more facilities exist since Al Orthodox also object to using the official pools at Al Hussein Youth City and Al Hassan Sports City.

The JSF said that the reasons behind Al Orthodox's decision are not convincing and the eventual losers were the players and the national team.

The JSF will conclude their 1997 season with the open championship September 15th.

The Junior Arab Swimming Championship which was scheduled for Aug. 18-21 is now cancelled.

"We cancelled the championship for not having enough participants from the Arab countries," said JSF Secretary Tala't Al Nassir.

Arab Cup Winners' Cup Wihdat lose opening match 1-0

By a Jordan Times
Staff Reporter

AL WIHDAAT Saturday lost 1-0 to Saudi Arabia's Al Shabab in their first match at the Arab Cup Winners' Cup which opened Friday in Ismailia, Egypt, with eight teams taking part.

While Al Wihdat showed an improved form against the team favoured to win the event, they lost the chance to equalise and settled for the defeat making tougher their chances of qualifying to the second round.

Al Wihdat are playing in Group 2 which also includes Kuwait's Al Arabi and Algeria's Mawloudieh.

Group 1 includes Egypt's Al Ismaili, Qatar's Al Itihad, Balata of Palestine and Libya's Al Ahli.

In the competitions opening matches Friday evening Al Ismaili beat Libya's Ahli 3-0, and Al Itihad of Qatar beat Palestine's Balata 5-2.

The draw has placed Al Wihdat in the relatively tougher group. Al Mawloudieh include five players on the Algerian national team; Al Shabab are trained by a Brazilian coach and are led by top Saudi striker Saeed Oweiran.

The Saudi team missed professional players like Salem Dossari and Fahd Mohallal who are on duty with their national team preparing for the second round of the Asian

World Cup qualifiers.

The Kuwaiti team will also be missing its internationals currently preparing for the same qualifiers.

Al Wihdat had arrived in Ismailia following a week-long intense training camp in Alexandria where they also had two friendly matches in preparation for the August 15-25 event.

The team's training camp and preparations came amid hopes to retain their Premier League title under new Iraqi coach Anwar Jassam who previously trained the Iraqi national teams.

Al Wihdat will next play Algeria's Mawloudieh Aug. 19 and Kuwait's Al Arabi Aug. 21.

The semifinals will be played Aug. 23 and the final Aug. 25.

The top two teams from each group qualify to the semifinals. The Arab Soccer Federation has allocated \$5000 for each participating team. There will also be lucrative prizes of \$50,000 for the winner, \$30,000 for runner up and \$20,000 for the third placed team.

The referees for the tournament include Omar Bashtawi of Jordan, Hassan Ali of Egypt, Karim Dahou of Algeria, Mohammad Shilmi of Libya, Nabil Ayyad of Lebanon, Yousef Aqili of Saudi Arabia and Jassem Khouri of Qatar.

Woodforde ousts Agassi in 3 sets

INDIANAPOLIS, Indiana (AFP) — Mark Woodforde outmanoeuvred Andre Agassi in blustery, sunny conditions to knock the 16th seed out in the quarter-finals of the \$1 million RCA Championships here Friday.

The 6-3, 5-7, 6-3 defeat in two hours, 11 minutes stopped Agassi's comeback win streak at three matches. But the former World No. 1, now fighting to escape from a No. 74 ranking, was far from displeased.

"I got more than I expected this week," said the 27-year-old Agassi. "My desire and competitiveness are still there, they are what will help me win more matches."

"My attitude is that you've got to want to win. Mark had a good match, especially with his forehand return. It was the best that I've seen from him. I'm not sure if he just had a great day or that shot is now a part of his arsenal."

Agassi battled in the swirling conditions to level the set at one each after Woodforde took the first after breaking Agassi for 4-2 after the American saved four break points.

In the final set, Agassi was broken twice, the second time after saving a match point.

"I'm not at the top of my game," said Woodforde. "I've played well the past week-and-a-half. My serve has gotten me out of tough situations. I played well last week."

"I think I can get a whole lot better. But the rest of the matches will depend on my condition. I know I can play with the rest of the guys, even at my age. But I know there is still a lot of room for improvement."

Woodforde had 20 aces, 37 winners and 55 unforced errors. He converted on only four of 15 break point opportunities.

Ninth seed Jonas Bjorkman from Sweden needed three sets and more than two hours to oust American qualifier Tommy Ho, who is debating whether to quit tennis and attend college in a few weeks at age 24.

The American has suffered from back trouble over the past two years that has hindered any possible tennis progress, though he has improved from a No. 478 standing to his present 329.

The Monte Carlo-based Bjorkman said that he might have to consider moving house to North America based on his results in the States this year.

"I'm feeling very good, it seems like I like to play over here," he said. "I like the hardcourt and I've played some good events here. But I played better (in earlier weeks) in Cincinnati and Montreal. Here it was just struggling to win."



Andre Agassi

Metz 3 points ahead in title race

PARIS (AFP) — Robert Pires and Bruno Rodriguez earned Metz a 2-1 victory at Chateauroux on Friday to put them three points clear in the French Football Championship.

Ferdinand Coly earned Chateauroux, playing their first ever home match in the top flight, a late consolation.

But Metz remain on top of the league with a 100 per cent record from three matches with Paris Saint Germain, Marseille, Bastia and Toulouse, who all play on Saturday, on six points.

Pires opening the scoring in the first half after reaching the by-line on the right before cutting back to make room for a left-footed shot.

Rodriguez added a second from a rebound, when Danny Boffin hit the crossbar, for this third league goal to go equal top of the goalscoring list with Marseille's Laurent Blanc.

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ANNOUNCEMENT

NOTICE FOR PREQUALIFICATION OF SPONSORS (**RFQ/RFI DOCUMENT AVAILABILITY**)

THE MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES (MEMR), an organization of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, issued a Notice for Prequalification of Sponsors in mid-July, 1997 ("Prequalification Notice"), announcing its intention to have its next Thermal Power Project, which would include a 400 kV, 132 kV switchyard and support facilities, procured on a build-own operate basis through international competitive bidding based on a detailed Request for Proposal document. The Prequalification Notice stated that MEMR would seek to prequalify interested firms and/or joint ventures ("Interested Firms") based on "Qualification Statements" and that the prequalification document containing the requirements for such Statements would be issued in August.

MEMR hereby announces that the prequalification document will be available on and after August 17, 1997. Interested Firms may pick up the document at the MEMR location listed below for JD\$5,000 or US\$50, or at the K&M location listed below for US\$50. Alternatively, Interested Firms may contact either of the contact persons specified at such locations on or after August 16 and request that the prequalification document be sent via express courier to the firm for a total fee of JD70,000 or US\$100 (MEMR location) or US\$100 (K&M location). Payment may be made in cash or by certified cheque or money order payable to, in the case of obtaining the document from MEMR, the "Ministry of Energy and Mineral Resources" and in the case of obtaining the document from K&M, "K&M Engineering and Consulting Corporation."

1. K&M Engineering and Consulting Corporation
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Potential Sponsors "Qualification Statements" must be submitted on or before 14 hours Amman time on September 16, 1997, to MEMR at the above address (#2).

